Assessment Expo Slated for March 19

NIU’s 3rd Annual Assessment Expo is set for March 19, 8:30 - 12:00, in the Holmes Student Center Sky Room. As in previous years, the Expo will highlight successful assessment practices on campus. Roundtable discussions and a poster session will focus primarily on, but not be limited to, the currently Proposed Baccalaureate Goals or three C’s – Critical Thinking, Communication and Context. Assessment of Creativity will also be included.

Expo 2010 will share tools for writing rubrics, evaluating internships, assessing student self-reflections, and more. Come on out to support and learn from your colleagues! Register online or call 753-8659.

Sixty-five participants attended last year’s Expo. Of those who completed a program evaluation:

- 97% believed the scope of the topics covered was appropriate
- 95% believed their objectives for attending the Expo were met
- 98% believed their participation in the Expo would benefit NIU students
- 97% believed the concepts and techniques in the program were directly applicable to their own teaching and other student-related activities.

Participants indicated that the Expo was “very well organized” and commented, “I loved the diversity of presenters.” The roundtable discussions earned positive feedback as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expo 2010 Featured Presentations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Hanley and Beatrix Hoffman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Streb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Blankenship</td>
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<td>Judith Chitwood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Herrmann</td>
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<td>Ibrahim Abdel-Motaleb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Dressen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrea Drott and Donna Schoenfeld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanne Isabel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this issue

FAQ: Utilizing Assessment Data in Your Program Review Cycle

Did You Know? Class of 2008 Alumni Give NIU Favorable Reviews

HLC Annual Meeting

Your Input is Welcome

Mark Your Calendar

Tool of the Month: Pace University’s Assessment Tracking Form

Health Enhancement Gets BAC to BASICS

How the Department of Marketing Closed the Loop

Using Bloom’s Taxonomy to Assess Student Learning

TOOLKIT ARCHIVES
ASSESSMENT FAQ:

Utilizing Assessment Data in Your Program’s Review Cycle

FAQ: How can our program utilize assessment data in the program review cycle?

Program review for NIU’s academic programs comes once every eight years. In the best of circumstances, program review can be a positive experience where program administrators, along with their faculty and staff, reflect on the overall mission, goals, operations, and student learning outcomes inherent in their programs. Program personnel have an opportunity to “tell their story,” highlight their successes, and identify future strategies and plans. At worst, program review can be a negative experience that sends program personnel into a hectic search for data and evidence to support their mission, goals, operations, and student learning outcomes. Often the data that program personnel find most difficult to lay their hands on are student learning outcomes assessment data.

The Office of Assessment (OAS) is frequently asked by program personnel how they can best utilize assessment data in the program review cycle. How can they best be prepared to use data to demonstrate and support student learning? The following three suggestions can go a long way toward helping program personnel to effectively use assessment data in the program review cycle.

First, be clear about the learning outcomes your program is trying to achieve with its students. Program faculty and staff involvement in the development of these learning outcomes is critical. Now more than ever, in a time of limited resources, it is important that we use those resources wisely and effectively to enable our students to achieve the learning outcomes that are most crucial to their success at NIU and beyond. Defining these outcomes (or redefining them as needed) is the best single step a program can take to tailor the assessment data they will collect for program improvement and program review.

Second, establish simple, yet authentic, assessment methods and processes to verify student learning outcomes. There are many assessment methods that can be easily adapted to measure student learning outcomes in a wide variety of programs. Consider course-embedded assessments, standardized assessments, external assessments, and peer- and self-assessments. Assessment processes can be improved with techniques such as curricular mapping, triangulation of assessment data to assess specific outcomes, and sampling from student works and other assessment artifacts. More information on these and other assessment methods and processes can be found in the OAS’s online Assessment Manual.

Third, start collecting and using assessment data early. NIU’s program review cycle is designed to allow academic units an opportunity to share their assessment data and the ways in which they use those data with their colleagues on the University Assessment Panel (UAP) four years before they undergo program review. When academic programs are requested to submit an Assessment Plan and Status Report to the UAP, this signals to them that assessment data will be important in the program review cycle and that feedback, instruction, and, in some cases, even funding is available to them to work early and continuously on this key component of the program review.

The common theme that runs throughout these three suggestions is that assessment, when done well, is a collaborative practice that promotes student learning. For program success with assessment: 1) student learning outcomes must be developed as a group effort; 2) assessment data on student learning should be collected, analyzed and used widely in a manner that involves students, faculty and staff in an authentic process; and 3) assessment data must be collected early and used consistently far before program review documents are due. Fortunately, the program review cycle at NIU provides support and mechanisms for accomplishing these activities.
**Assessment Tracking Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Mechanism and Dates (when assessed and when reviewed)</th>
<th>Issue (emerging from the Fall 06 semester)</th>
<th>Implementation Plan (indicated by whom)</th>
<th>Implementation (by whom and when)</th>
<th>Assessment (by whom and when)</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2007 Summative Assessment Exam, item K3</td>
<td>Weakness in software testing.</td>
<td>Formation of a curriculum committee subcommittee to determine how testing can be integrated throughout the curriculum.</td>
<td>Christelle Scharff chaired a committee during Fall 2007 that recommended concrete topics and exercises for particular classes.</td>
<td>In one section of CS241, the plan of having students testing each others’ programs was helpful.</td>
<td>Students in CS241 now develop lists of test cases to try to expose faults in other students’ programs. Student performance in the Spring 2009 Summative Assessment Exam went up to 85%. This result exceeds the 70% expected achievement level by a wide margin. Testing is a topic in CS389.</td>
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Tracking the use of assessment results has multiple benefits. It can be used internally when programs are due to be reviewed by the University Assessment Panel and the Academic Planning Council. It is useful for accreditation, both at the disciplinary and institution level. Tracking the use of assessment data is also helpful in responding to inquiries by external parties, such as prospective students and their parents, as well as governmental institutions. Finally, the data may be used to underpin journal articles, dissertations, grant applications, and so on.

Questions may be addressed directly to Dr. Stix or Dr. Cotoranu.
DID YOU KNOW?

Class of 2008 Alumni

Give NIU Favorable Reviews

Results are in for the Baccalaureate Alumni Survey for the class of 2008. Respondents felt positive about their education at NIU:

- 99 percent found that, in their major, professors were accessible outside of class
- 98 percent felt that their major professors’ expectations for the quality of student work were high
- 94 percent thought the amount of time it took to complete their degree was reasonable
- 94 percent expressed a positive attitude toward their degree major.

Alumni were also pleased with how NIU prepared them for life after graduation:

- 95 percent described their overall university experiences and courses as helpful in developing their ability to think critically: to withhold judgment, raise questions, and examine contrary views
- 96 percent indicated that their overall university facilities and equipment were adequate to support the degree program
- 89 percent said that their degree prepared them for their present job

Overall, survey respondents had good things to say about the university:

- 95 percent stated they would recommend NIU to their friends and family and…
- 96 percent indicated a positive attitude toward NIU.

HLC Annual Meeting set for April 9-13, 2010

Registration is open for the Higher Learning Commission annual meeting, which will take place at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. One must register by March 26, 2010, to take advantage of early registration discounts and to be included in the Who’s Here List distributed at the meeting. Pre-registration closes on April 2, 2010. After April 2, registration must occur on-site. Discounts are available for groups of three or more attendees from the same institution.

The meeting will cover the latest information on:

- Commission Policies and Procedures
- Accountability Initiatives
- Assessment of Student Learning
- State, Regional, and National Initiatives

Targeted programs will be available for presidents, peer reviewers, self-study teams, and those engaged in quality improvement initiatives.

Future meeting dates are April 8-12, 2011, and March 30-April 2, 2012.

Your Input is Welcome

What assessment methods have worked well for you? What findings have helped you modify your program? Toolkit would love to print your assessment tips or success story! We’re looking to share the wisdom we each develop, making the work of assessment more productive. If you’d like material to be considered for inclusion in a future edition of Toolkit, submit a Word document of no more than 300 words as an email attachment to cdoug@niu.edu.
Health Enhancement Gets BAC to BASICS

Health Enhancement, the health promotion department in Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, used a pre/post-test model to assess the effectiveness of a two-session, alcohol-use, skills-training intervention known as BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students) to influence students’ behavior. Among other outcomes, the pilot program set the following assessment target for those who attend the follow-up session: 70% of students will report a .01 - .03 decrease in Blood Alcohol Content (BAC).

Twenty-four of the 25 students (96 percent) who attended their follow-up session reported a significant average BAC decrease to .05 (p ≤ .0001). Additional findings during the follow-up session included:

- 71 percent reported a decrease in negative consequences or incidents of harm,
- 88 percent reported an increase in practicing protective practices,
- 100 percent reported drinking less to lower their BAC,
- 29 percent reported improvement in academic performance, and
- 100 percent reported avoiding negative consequences due to decreased consumption (avoided trouble, fewer embarrassing moments, etc.).

Health Enhancement’s success with this pilot program mirrors that of other institutions. As a result, BASICS has been expanded to accommodate more referrals. This will increase the number of students who have access to additional alcohol education messages.

How the Department of Marketing Closed the Loop

The 2009-2010 Assessment Status Report for the B.S. in Marketing described several ways in which faculty used assessment results to improve students’ learning. Excerpts from the Report:

- First, based primarily on results of the portfolio, capstone course, and Marketing 350 assessment methods, a concerted effort was undertaken to ensure that each of the eight core learning outcomes was addressed in multiple marketing courses.
- Second (as a result of review of portfolios), regardless of which instructors are teaching individual sections of courses, there is now almost 100 percent compliance to the request that like courses include similar assignments or means of achieving the same learning outcomes.
- Third, in response to evaluations made by members of the Portfolio Committee and capstone course instructors, the department determined that the technological expertise outcome should be dropped and replaced with a marketing metrics outcome.
- Fourth, as a result of the need to continually improve student writing skills (as noted by Portfolio Committee members, capstone course and Marketing 350 faculty, internship supervisors, and advisory board members), the Department continues to encourage faculty to include more writing in their coursework and fund a writing lab within the department, which is staffed by a graduate student.
- Fifth (as a result of a finding from the Marketing 350 assessment method), special technology has been added to the Department’s sales classrooms so that more attention can be focused on oral communication and presentation skills in the Marketing 350 class.
- Sixth (addressing concerns raised by Portfolio Committee and Sales Advisory Board members), two new sales classes have been developed and are being proposed at the curriculum level to provide students with more global business experiences and perspective.
Bloom’s Taxonomy is a classification system developed in 1956 by education psychologist Benjamin Bloom. The original intent in creating the taxonomy was to focus on three major domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Despite the creators’ intent to address all three domains, Bloom’s Taxonomy applies only to acquiring knowledge in the cognitive domain, which involves intellectual skill development.

The original Bloom’s Taxonomy contained six developmental categories: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The first step in the taxonomy focused on knowledge acquisition and at this level, students recall, memorize, list, and repeat information. In the second tier, students classify, describe, discuss, identify, and explain information. Next, students demonstrate, interpret, and write about what they’ve learned and solve problems. In the subsequent step, students compare, contrast, distinguish, and examine what they’ve learned with other information, and they have the opportunity to question and test this knowledge. Then students argue, defend, support, and evaluate their opinion on this information. Finally, in the original model of Bloom’s Taxonomy, students create a new project, product, or point of view.

In the 1990s, one of Bloom’s students, Lorin Anderson, revised the original taxonomy. In the amended version of Bloom’s Taxonomy, the names of the major cognitive process categories were changed to indicate action because thinking implies active engagements. Instead of listing knowledge as a part of the taxonomy, the category is divided into different types of knowledge: factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive.

Bloom’s Taxonomy in the Classroom

By using Bloom’s Taxonomy in the classroom, teachers can assess students on multiple learning outcomes that are aligned to local, state, and national standards and objectives.

--Heather Coffey

Using Bloom’s Taxonomy to Assess Learning Outcomes

Thanks to kind permission granted by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Toolkit is pleased to reprint excerpts from this article by Heather Coffey of LEARN NC.

Bloom’s Taxonomy can be achieved with one image. In order for teachers to develop lesson plans that integrate Bloom’s Taxonomy, they write their lessons in the language that focuses on each level. The United States Geological Survey provides a list of verbs for each level of Bloom’s Taxonomy for teachers to use when developing lesson plans. (Although the list is designed for environmental science teachers, the examples will work for any discipline.)

Notes
ALL ARE INVITED to spend time with the Campus Assessment Network, which meets from 1:30 - 3:30 in the basement conference room of Adams Hall this spring on the following dates:

- **February 12**
- **March 26**
- **April 23**

The Network’s business items fill the first hour. Beginning at 2:30, the agenda is devoted to implementing scholarship of assessment activities, which is a follow-up to the assessment book group from the fall.

Reading the book, “Building a Scholarship of Assessment” by Trudy Banta, is NOT a prerequisite to dropping in on this group. Everyone is welcome. The exercises explore a variety of assessment partnerships. For example, two or more academic departments might engage students to assess their hands-on learning experiences. Other practices explore partnerships between academic and support units to promote holistic student success. The point is to come up with new collaborations which benefit students and assess those benefits.

For more information, call 753-8659 or email Carolinda Douglass.

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**UAP Spring Meeting Dates**

University Assessment Panel meetings are scheduled for the following dates from 10:00 a.m. to noon in Altgeld 203, except where noted.

- February 19
- March 5
- March 19 - HSC Sky Room (Assessment Expo)
- April 2
- April 16

**RosEvaluation Conference 2010:**

Assessment for Program and Institutional Accreditation

On the campus of Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
Terre Haute, Indiana
April 9-10, 2010

Participants may register in advance or at the door.

The RosEvaluation Conference 2010 will bring together those who are developing assessment and evaluation tools to share information and their expertise. The conference will emphasize concrete, effective, and efficient solutions to assessment and evaluation challenges.

**Keynote Speaker:**

*Alexander C. McCormick, Ph.D.*

Director of National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Associate Professor, Indiana University, Bloomington

**Topic:** Student Engagement as a Window on Educational Quality