Process for creating and maintaining an effective assessment system

Student Learning Outcomes

Create standardized global goals for students across a given degree area. Use Bloom’s Taxonomy for clearly defined and achievable outcomes.

Assessment Initiatives

Establish methods for quantifying the assessment of the outcomes for each student or groups of students.

Evidence / Findings / Data

Use the results of the initiatives to determine performance of students in the areas of the established learning outcomes. Identify the strongest and weakest areas of performance.

Use of Results

Continue using materials and/or instructional methods that are producing strong areas of growth, retention, and performance. Add, remove, or adjust materials and/or instructional methods to improve the weakest areas of growth, retention, and performance.
Overview

Every degree program at Northern Illinois University has a set of student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes are what students will know, be able to do, and value at the end of their degree program. Every degree program has in place key assessments to determine if students are able to meet the degree program student learning outcomes.

Northern Illinois University has set in place policies and processes through our shared governance to ensure students meet university and program-specific learning outcomes. These policies and procedures are coordinated through the Office of the Provost, with direction, guidance, and oversight provided by several university committees and offices, including the Academic Planning Council, the University Assessment Panel, and the Office of Assessment Services. These university-level efforts are coordinated with college and program-level faculty and staff, and include the annual assessment update process, status reports, and program review.

At Northern Illinois University, the annual assessment update process is one of several opportunities a program has to regularly and systematically revisit their assessment plan and make appropriate recommendations and adjustments to instruction, the curriculum, and/or elements of the assessment program itself. This is also an opportunity for the university to document the ongoing use of assessment data to inform program quality.

Every degree program systematically collects data, year after year, in an effort to continually improve. The annual assessment update is an opportunity for a degree program to demonstrate how it is collecting, using, and reporting student- and program-level assessment data and to receive feedback on the effectiveness of those efforts. The efforts put forth in the annual assessment update are intended to be used for multiple purposes, not limited to a single, annual compliance endeavor. Assessment data that is collected and used as part of the annual assessment update process can be further used in developing the status report (which is completed midway through the 8-year program review cycle) and for program review. What matters most in the annual assessment update process is that actual data is effectively collected, used, and reported to drive program improvement. Formative feedback is provided on the quality of the assessments, the quality of the student learning outcomes, the effective reporting of the results of data collection (i.e., real evidence from the assessments), and the effective use of the results in making continuous program improvements. Formative feedback is intended to provide guidance on the overall effectiveness of the assessment process, noting areas of both strengths and areas in need of improvement. As the degree program and the institution evolve, so will the assessment program and assessment processes.

The Assessment Committee of the School of Theatre and Dance has developed an assessment procedure that will satisfy the expectations of the university, and also actually assist us with the assessment of our students. As the required assessments are based on degree and not on area of emphasis, one of our greatest challenges has been to choose an assessment topic that can be measured across all disciplines.

School of Theatre and Dance Learning Outcomes

MFA Programs
A) Maintain a resume to professional standards.
B) Update and enhance a portfolio of professional caliber.
C) Audition and interview to professional norms in the area of specialty.
D) Demonstrate a professional work ethic that includes collaborative effort and respect for the creative process.
E) Master advanced principles of performance / design, including the industry’s current practices and terminology.
F) Analyze and resolve special issues in performance, technology, or design.
BFA Programs
A) Develop a resume that reflects professional standards
B) Create and maintain a portfolio of professional caliber
C) Exhibit audition and interview techniques to professional norms in the area of specialty.
D) Establish a professional work ethic that includes collaborative skills and respect for the creative process.
E) Master the fundamental principles of performance / design, including the industry’s current practices and terminology.
F) Analyze and resolve specialized issues pertaining to at least one area of theatre and/or dance: performance, technology, design, stage management.

BA Program
A) Demonstrate a literacy of “language of the stage”: analyze a script, explain its historical and contemporary structure, as well as the social and political effects of a performance of the script.
B) Interpret stage events: read gesture as action, translate rhythm of design elements into predictable responses from observers.
C) Retrieve, evaluate and effectively use information to address pertinent research questions in theatre.
D) Tell original stories through live performance.
E) Demonstrate acting skills and the development of character for the stage.
F) Apply the basic skills necessary to plan, perform, produce, write and direct for the theatre industry.
G) Demonstrate professional-level skills in practical production work.
H) Make use of current theatrical technology in the areas of design, design implementation, and operation.
I) Produce a scholarly and/or creative project based on the individual’s intended area of contribution in the professional industry.

School of Theatre and Dance Assessment Method – P.A.C.T.

As each area already assesses the developing practical skills of the student using academic means, our assessment process focuses on the assessment of the professional development of the student – an assessment topic that we all agree is of mutual interest to all areas of emphasis and all degrees in our school. The professional development assessment rubric of a student in the School of Theatre and Dance is called “PACT”. The well rounded young professional in our industry should place an equal emphasis on each of the following major areas: Practical skills and knowledge, Attitude, Communication, and Teamwork. Below, please find the essential criteria used to assess each of the four assessment areas as it applies all areas of emphasis, as well as a chart of guidelines that will assist with how to evaluate each student on the different criteria.

P - Practical Skill and Knowledge
- Work done by the student is of high quality.
- Student displays a depth of knowledge in his/her specific field of study.
- Student displays a breadth of knowledge in the entertainment industry.
- Work done by student adds creative value to the projects served by the work.
- Student demonstrates and advocates safe practices while performing tasks and duties.

A - Attitude
- Student displays spirit and enthusiasm in the performance of professional roles.
- Student is self-motivated and takes responsibility for producing results in a timely manner.
- Student is an active seeker of knowledge beyond the scope of coursework.
- Student demonstrates confidence in the execution of his/her assigned roles
- Student accepts constructive criticism for poor work and displays humility in accepting praise for good work.
C - Communication
- Student’s written communication is neat, concise, accurate, and polite.
- Student’s verbal communication is appropriate for the situation.
- Student’s graphic communication is thorough, complete, and easy to interpret.
- Student chooses the most appropriate form of communication for the given situation.
- Student exhibits sensitivity in communication (of all forms) with others.

T - Teamwork
- Student is punctual for meetings and work/rehearsal sessions.
- Contributions by the student to the team are appropriate to the student’s role within the team.
- Student is responsive to the needs of the team.
- Student cares about the quality of the work produced by the team.
- Student is considered reliable by other members of the team.

**Initiative 1: Professional Development Assessment – Faculty Assesses Students**

Early in the spring semester, Area Heads from each area will conduct a survey of their faculty containing four assessment questions for each student. Each question will contain specific criteria defining the assessment points and providing four possible responses by the faculty member. Survey results will be collated and available for faculty members to review prior to verbal review with the student when he/she completes the portfolio/jury/exam later in the semester.

Four surveys will be sent out:
- BA Faculty will evaluate all BA students
- Design & Technology Faculty will evaluate all MFA and BFA Design & Technology students
- Dance Faculty will evaluate all BFA Dance students
- Acting Faculty will evaluate all MFA and BFA Acting students

Each evaluation will contain ALL students, but each student will only be evaluated on each of the four major assessment areas, and only in one of four ways.

Assessment Response Choices:
Exceeds Expectations / Meets Expectations / Progressing / Does not meet expectations
## Assessment Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical Skills &amp; Knowledge</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Progressing</th>
<th>Does not meet expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior quality work produced / Outstanding creative value added to projects / Uncompromising safety / Significant depth of knowledge in a specific field / Significant breadth of knowledge across all disciplines</td>
<td>Excellent quality work produced / Very good creative value added to projects / Reasonably safe worker / Acceptable depth of knowledge in a specific field / Acceptable breadth of knowledge across all disciplines</td>
<td>Ordinary quality work produced / Some creative value added to projects / Mostly safe worker / Marginal depth of knowledge in a specific field / Marginal breadth of knowledge across all disciplines</td>
<td>Poor quality work produced / Little creative value added to projects / Unsafe worker / Poor depth of knowledge in a specific field / Poor breadth of knowledge across all disciplines</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Progressing</th>
<th>Does not meet expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always enthusiastic / Projects always on time or early / Extremely confident / Accepts criticism well but compliments others when praised</td>
<td>Usually enthusiastic / Projects usually on time / Somewhat confident / Accepts criticism and compliments equally well.</td>
<td>Enthusiastic some of the time / Projects sometimes on time / Marginal confidence / Accepts criticism begrudgingly but accepts compliments very well.</td>
<td>Rarely enthusiastic or not at all / Projects rarely on time / Lacks confidence / Blames others for poor work but accepts compliments very well.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Progressing</th>
<th>Does not meet expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always uses clear and concise writing and speech / Outstanding graphic skills / Always chooses the correct form of communication</td>
<td>Usually uses clear and concise writing and speech / Very good graphic skills / Usually chooses the correct form of communication</td>
<td>Sometimes uses clear and concise writing and speech / Marginal graphic skills / Sometimes chooses the correct form of communication</td>
<td>Rarely uses clear concise writing and speech / Poor graphic skills / Rarely chooses the correct form of communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teamwork</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Progressing</th>
<th>Does not meet expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always early / Always makes appropriate contribution / Expects outstanding work to be produced / Extremely reliable</td>
<td>Always on time / Usually makes appropriate contribution / Expects excellent work to be produced / Quite reliable</td>
<td>Usually on time / Sometimes makes appropriate contribution / Expects passable work to be produced / Somewhat reliable</td>
<td>Rarely on time / Rarely makes appropriate contribution / Expects others to produce more work than self / Not reliable</td>
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**Initiative 2: Student Self Assessment – Students Assesses Themselves**

During the spring semester, Area Heads from each area will conduct a survey of their students containing twenty-four assessment questions each. Four batteries of six questions each will contain specific criteria defining the assessment points and providing six possible responses by the student. Survey results will be collated and available for faculty members to review prior to verbal review with the student when he/she completes the portfolio/jury/exam later in the semester. If desired, these results can be discussed with the student during the interview and used to help set personal goals for the coming year.

**Practical Skill and Knowledge**
- The work I produce is of high quality.
- I display a depth of knowledge in my specific field of study.
- I display a breadth of knowledge in the entertainment industry.
- My work adds creative value to the projects served by the work.
- I demonstrate and advocate safe practices while performing tasks and duties.
- I increase my knowledge by learning from my peers.

**Attitude**
- I display spirit and enthusiasm in the performance of professional roles.
- I am self-motivated and take responsibility for producing results in a timely manner.
- I am an active seeker of knowledge beyond the scope of coursework.
- I demonstrate confidence in the execution of my assigned roles.
- I accept constructive criticism for poor work and display humility in accepting praise for good work.
- I show respect to my mentors and those who influence my progress.

**Communication**
- My written communication is neat, concise, accurate, and polite.
- My verbal communication is clear and direct, and appropriate for the situation.
- My graphic communication is thorough, complete, easy to interpret, and promotes clarity.
- I choose the most appropriate form of communication for the given situation.
- I exhibit sensitivity in communication (of all forms) with others.
- I am honest and sincere in my dealings with others.

**Teamwork**
- I am punctual for team meetings and work/rehearsal sessions. I arrive early and am ready to begin at the published start time.
- My contributions to the team are appropriate to my role within my team.
- I am responsive to the needs of my team and am considered reliable by other members of my team.
- The quality of the work produced by my team is highly important to me.
- I am considered to be a positive part of the production process.
- I share my knowledge by teaching my peers and empowering them to do their best.

**Assessment Response Choices:**
Outstanding / Excellent / Very Good / Satisfactory / Need Work / Not Applicable
Iniative 3: Final Assessment – Portfolio Reviews and Juries

Near the end of spring semester, Area Heads from each area will conduct portfolio reviews and/or juries which include a personal interview with each student. These will be followed by a survey of their faculty containing final assessment questions for each student that collate directly with the Learning Outcomes determined by the Assessment Committee. The battery of questions is to be created by each area, and should reflect the intent of one or more published Learning Outcomes. The questions should be published on a written sheet so that the faculty members can refer to the Survey results will be collated and reported to the Chair of the Assessment Committee to be included in the Annual Report. Assessment questions are provided below, with the corresponding Learning Outcome(s) indicated in brackets.

Survey questions for Design & Technology faculty – MFA and BFA:
1. Student’s appearance is appropriate for the situation (C)
2. Student’s resume is appropriate for his/her background and emphasis (A)
3. Student’s presentation shows a wide variety of work (B)
4. Work shown by student is of a high quality (B)
5. Work shown by student clearly highlights his/her process (B)
6. Student shows sufficient evidence of class work (B,D)
7. Student shows sufficient evidence of production work (B)
8. Student’s portfolio material is easy to view and interpret (B)
9. Student successfully emphasizes his/her strong points (C)
10. Student’s presentation was cohesive and conveyed a positive attitude (C)
11. Student demonstrates effective delivery of material: including eye contact, effective gestures, vocal variety, articulation, and pronunciation of words (C)
12. Student showed an appropriate quantity of work for the given time frame (C,D)
13. Practical Skills and Knowledge – Please rate student’s proficiency in this area (D)
14. Attitude – Please rate student’s proficiency in this area (D,E)
15. Communication – Please rate student’s proficiency in this area (D)
16. Teamwork – Please rate student’s proficiency in this area (D)
17. Student shows professional growth in the School of Theatre and Dance (F)
18. For Sophomores only, I recommend this student for retention in the BFA Design Tech program (Outstanding for YES, No Show for NO)

Survey questions for Dance Faculty (BFA):
1. Student is on time for class and in proper attire (CD)
2. Student does not miss class. (CD)
3. Student displays positive attitude and energy in their class work. (CD)
4. Student takes and applies corrections given by faculty. (E)
5. Student takes time outside of class to improve technical vocabulary and physical challenges. (EF)
6. Student has improved flexibility for dance. (EF)
7. Student has the ability to use physical ability as a means of self-expression. (EF)
8. Student has improved strength for dance. (EF)
9. Student maintains a healthy physical profile. (EF)
10. Student has demonstrated an increase in technical modern vocabulary and concepts. (DE)
11. Student demonstrates ability to explore a variety of movement qualities. (EF)
12. Student has improved execution of technical modern vocabulary and concepts (EF)
13. Student has demonstrated an increase in technical ballet vocabulary. (EF)
14. Student has improved execution of technical ballet vocabulary (EF)
15. Student demonstrates proper alignment and turn-out. (EF)
16. Student is able to count music and demonstrates musical interpretation and phrasing. (EF)
17. Student demonstrates high quality work in rehearsals and performances. (EF)
18. Student is on time and prepared for rehearsals, fittings and performances. (CDE)
19. Student displays positive attitude and energy in rehearsals. (DE)
20. Student works as a “team player” with faculty, designers, cast and crew. (DE)
21. Student demonstrates professional growth in the program and preparedness for professional career in
dance. (ABD)

Survey questions for Acting Faculty (MFA and BFA):
1. The actor exhibits professionalism and commitment to the creative process. (ABCD)
2. The actor demonstrates consistent growth toward mastery of the craft. (E)
3. The actor has the ability to perform specific techniques learned in class with proficiency and ease. (EF)
4. The actor is able to listen, see, and respond with specificity, range, and nuance with another actor. (EF)
5. The actor demonstrates the ability to connect to the imaginary circumstances in a vivid, deep, and
personal way. (EF)
6. The actor’s chosen objective is specific, personal, connected, and justified through clear systematic action. (EF)
7. The actor can be heard and understood in class and on stage. (EF)
8. The actor’s voice is vibrant, expansive, and expressive. (EF)
9. The actor demonstrates the ability to speak complex text with clarity and nuance. (EF)
10. The actor is resolving physical issues or tensions that are impediments in their work. (EF)
11. The actor demonstrates ease and fluidity while physically activated. (EF)
12. The actor can translate their inner impulse to full physical expression. (EF)
13. The actor knows how to “warm up”: prepare oneself physically, vocally, and emotionally for the given
acting assignment. (EF)
14. The actor is prepared for auditions (Monologues, callbacks, resumes) at the level expected of their year in
the training. (AC)

Survey questions for the BA Faculty:
1. Student produces work according to assigned schedules. (G)
2. The student shows curiosity in class and genuine passion in production work. (FGH)
3. The student speaks clearly, coherently and appropriately to faculty and peers. (DE)
4. The student can express and support a personal interpretation/judgment after reading a play or viewing a
performance. (AB)
5. The student can tell a story well. (DEF)
6. The student is able to “see” a play from page to stage. (ABFH)
7. The student can situate specific plays historically and find relevance in them for production today. (ACF)
8. The student writes college-level essays and college-level research papers. (ACFI)
9. The student shows familiarity with the components (elements of design, principles of design) of the
theatrical design process. (BI)
10. The student knows and observes professional procedures for the proper maintenance of costumes,
lighting instruments, props, and set. (GH)

Selection of Evaluation
Outstanding / Excellent / Very Good / Satisfactory / Ordinary / Poor / Unsatisfactory / Unprepared / No Show
Initiative 1
Faculty Assessment - Survey
Professional Development of Students
Four Questions – P1/A1/C1/T1
Four possible answers – Exceeds/Meets/Progressing/Does Not

Initiative 2
Student Self-Assessment - Survey
Professional Development of Student
Twenty-four Questions – P6/A6/C6/T6
Six possible answers – Outstanding / Excellent / Very Good / Satisfactory / Need Work / Not Applicable

Combine Results for Comparison

Private Interview with Area Faculty and Individual Student
Use combined results of surveys along with results of Portfolio Review, Comprehensive Exam, and/or Juried Performance to discuss goals attained and goals to set.

Initiative 3
Faculty Assessment - Survey
Portfolio / Jury Assessment
Questions determined by area
Nine possible answers – Outstanding / Excellent / Very Good / Satisfactory / Ordinary / Poor / Unsatisfactory / Unprepared / No Show

Results collated and formatted for use by faculty to improve program and provide data for Annual Report.