

What IS Assessment?
Cutting through the jargon and confusion

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What is Assessment?

A process to improve

Assessment of Student Learning includes:

- Discovering what students are learning
- Determining if actual learning meets expectations
- Improving future learning by
 - Changing curriculum
 - Changing delivery or processes
 - Changing access to resources

In other words....

- What do you want?
- What do you do to get what you want?
- What do you get?
- What do you keep to continue to get what you want?
- What do you change to get more of what you want?

Common Questions

- What do you expect the students to learn (intended outcomes)?
- How do you think curriculum supports the learning you want?
- How do you think the delivery supports the learning you want?
- How do you think the out-of-class resources support the learning you want?
- What are students actually learning?
- What can you change to improve learning?

Some Common (and Confusing) Terminology

- Formative/summative
- Qualitative/quantitative
- Assessment/evaluation
- Validity/reliability
- Goals/objectives/outcomes
- Judgment/improvement

**Assessment of Student Learning
as a Process**

- Basic Steps in the Process to Improve Student Learning
 - Articulate Expected Student Learning
 - Align Curriculum, teaching methods, and student resources with Expected Student Learning
 - Determine Actual Student Learning
 - Determine what is working well and make needed improvements
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Expected Student Learning

- What knowledge do you want students to gain through your courses and programs?
 - What skills do you want the students to develop?
 - What behaviors do you want the students to exhibit?
 - To what extent and in what ways do you want the students to be able to use the skills after completing a course or program?
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Alignment

- Why do you offer the required and recommended courses in the majors at your institution?
 - Where in courses and program are students given opportunities to learn what is expected?
 - How do the teaching strategies support the learning you desire?
 - How do the out-of-class resources support the learning you desire?
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A Mapping Grid Example

COURSE	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
101	I			I
112			I	
201	I	I	R	I
255				
312	R		R	R
421			R	
493	D/I			D/I

I: Introduce R: Reinforce/practice D: Demonstrate

Actual Student Learning

- What are you already doing that could provide specific information about what students have learned?
- What actual learning information can you glean from specific test questions or culminating program experiences?
- What are additional methods you could use to determine actual learning?

Make Needed Improvements in Student Learning

- What did you learn from discovering actual student learning?
 - Where students are meeting or exceeding expectations?
 - Where students are not meeting expectations?
- How can you use this information to make improvements?

Make Improvements in Determining Actual Student Learning

- What else do you need to know about what your students have learned?
- How can you find out this needed information in the future?
- In what ways can you improve the ways you discover actual student learning?

Conclusions

- Assessment of student learning is integral to the teaching and learning process
- The steps in the assessment process are the same for all institutions, however, they may not be completed in the same manner

The power of assessment

- To improve stakeholders' understanding of the power and usefulness of the assessment process:
 - Know the meaning of the terminology
 - Realize that the assessment process is about improving student learning
 - Understand that the process is meaningful only if the articulated outcomes are meaningful
 - Agree that student learning is at the core of any college or university's mission
