Assessing the GE Program

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What is Assessment?

“Learning is preeminent at California State University, Fullerton.”

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

“Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of qualitative and quantitative data to improve student learning and development.” (Draft UPS 300.022)
## What is Assessment? (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment is...</th>
<th>Assessment is NOT...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About student learning</td>
<td>About faculty performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused on SLOs</td>
<td>Focused on institutional characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authentic introspection</td>
<td>Artificial process to meet accreditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>To understand the achievement of a group of students</td>
<td>To determine individual performance in a course</td>
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<tr>
<td>An integral part of learning &amp; teaching</td>
<td>More busy work</td>
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<tr>
<td>To improve learning and teaching</td>
<td>To conduct program review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative process</td>
<td>A few people’s job</td>
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What about Program Performance Review?

- Comprehensive evaluation of the program
- More summative & less frequent
- Student learning is not the only area of focus
- Practice vs. Outcome:
  
  “What we are doing” vs. “What our students are becoming”
What is outcome-based assessment?

- Assessment objectives aligned with SLOs
- Valid & reliable evidence for specific learning outcomes
- Demonstrating use of results for improvement
- Promoting criterion-referenced assessment
- Encouraging mixed-method approach
- Encouraging authentic assessment
- Integrating formative & summative assessment
## Why outcome-based assessment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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| **Students** | • Set & communicate high standards  
• Ensure students reach these standards through consistent evaluation  
• Ensure cohesion & coordination between courses/programs  
• Provide outcome-based criteria to judge courses/programs |
| **Faculty**  | • Know how much and how well students are learning  
• Encourage curriculum cohesion & course coordination  
• Facilitate interdisciplinary & intercampus discussions  
• Provide evidence to justify resource/funding needs |
| **Institution** | • Demonstrate institutional commitment to “continuous improvement”  
• Provide data for academic & institutional strategic planning  
• Meet internal and external reporting needs/requirements (e.g. accreditation, system-wide reporting) |
What do our faculty say?

“...gave us the time and space to think about what we want our GE students to learn and how to evaluate that.”

Heightened awareness of assessment challenges, and fostered collegiality

Identified gaps and appropriate improvement strategies
How to do outcome-based assessment?

- Institution Mission
- University Learning Goals
- GE/Program Learning Goals
- GE/Program Learning Outcomes

Assessment Planning → Improvement Actions

Assessment Planning → Data Collection

Assessment Planning → Result Interpretation

Multi-Level Alignment

Documentation
How to create good learning outcomes?

- Specific & simple statements
- Clear & concise language
- Demonstrable:
  - Handout: Bloom’s taxonomy; Active verb
- Measurable
  - Avoid “compound outcomes”
- Quality, not quantity:
  - Prioritize
  - Manageable number of SLOs
  - Sustainable overtime
Curriculum Mapping: Synergy across curriculum

**SLOs accomplished collectively through multiple courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>SLO 1</th>
<th>SLO 2</th>
<th>SLO 3</th>
<th>SLO 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>I, D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>101</td>
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<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>D, M</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*I = Introduced; D = Developed & practiced with feedback; M = Demonstrated at mastery level appropriate for graduation (Allen, 2006)*

- Ensure cohesion & coordination between courses
- Identify curriculum gaps
- Establish longitudinal monitoring of student learning
- Provide “spiral” learning & assessment opportunities
- Create a holistic learning experience
## SLO examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vague</th>
<th>Improved</th>
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| By the completion of the program, students will have improved their understanding of the complete research process. | By the completion of the program, students will be able to:  
  • **describe** the standard research process  
  • **evaluate** critically the quality of research by others  
  • **formulate** research questions designed to test theories  
  • **formulate** a complete and logical plan for data analysis  
  • **interpret** research findings and **draw** appropriate conclusions |
| By the end of this course, students will have a deeper appreciation of literature and literary movements in general. | By the end of this course, students will be able to:  
  • **identify** and **describe** the major literary movements of the 20th century  
  • **perform** close readings of literary texts  
  • **evaluate** a literary work based on selected and articulated standards |
Questions & Comments