

## Summary of Assessment Activities

This Summary of Assessment Activities provides a survey of various methods that can be used for institutional and student outcomes assessment. For additional information on any of these activities please contact Mark Radlowski or Norayne Rosero.

### Direct Methods

Activity	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Capstone/Senior Courses or Projects	- project or course that requires students to apply the knowledge of the discipline as a summary of their educational experience	-opportunity to integrate the study of a discipline -may be used to measure multiple components of a curriculum -results useful for course, program and institutional levels -provides assessment of student thinking and communication skills as well as knowledge -geared specifically to goals, objectives and students within the program -performance criteria tied to curriculum -faculty control over use and interpretation of results	-requires additional course or project within the curriculum - replication of results not possible -standardization and validation of techniques difficult -summative assessment only	-should be combined with other forms of assessment
Classroom discussion	-in-class dialogue used to evaluate student understanding of the material presented	-allows for individualized questions, follow-up probes, clarifications, etc. -provides immediate feedback to instruction -directly linked to teaching and learning of course material -faculty control over use and interpretation of results	-requires direct contact with individuals -students may be intimidated / uncomfortable -bias due to wording and manner in which questioning is done	-should be combined with other forms of assessment

### Direct Methods continued

Activity	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Classroom Research / Assessment Techniques	-course embedded assessment techniques used to provide quick, easy-to-analyze feedback on student responses to instruction	-provides direct feedback to instruction -directly linked to course teaching and learning -conveys an interest in student's opinions and learning -geared specifically to goals, objectives and students within the course -faculty control over use and interpretation of results	-results specific to particular class -replication of results difficult -standardization and validation of techniques difficult -not useful for overall program assessment	-resource manuals should be available to instructors through academic departmental offices -should be combined with other forms of assessment
Course Assignments homework / examination / quizzes (locally developed)	-course embedded activities designed by the faculty in the program to provide assessment and evaluation of student learning	-performance criteria tied to curriculum -faculty/institutional ownership and control over use and interpretation of results -provides direct feedback to instructor -geared specifically to goals, objectives and students within the course, program or institution	-costly in terms of time for development and interpretation of results -more difficult to establish reliability, validity and credibility -no comparison norms -not as useful for overall program assessment	-training should be provided for helping with construction and grading -should be combined with other forms of assessment
External Examiners (Reviewers)	-expert(s) in the field from outside the program used to supplement the assessment process	-provides external validity -useful for both course and program level assessment -increases collaborative efforts between departments and/or institutions	-difficulty in locating qualified reviewers -costly in time for the reviewing process -difficulty in matching examiner's expertise and program outcomes	-consortia can be formed among institutions with similar programs to minimize costs -most effective at program level -use as a supplement to enhance validity

### Direct Methods continued

Activity	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Field observations/ Performance assessment	-evaluation of the students' abilities to use knowledge of methods, procedures and analysis skills in an authentic environment	-measures application of learning to natural settings -relevant to measuring specific outcomes of training - allows faculty control over use and interpretation of results	-frequency toward subjective grading -costly in terms of time for evaluation -presence of examiner may alter behavior and performance	-develop specific criteria for performance (rubric) -provide training for evaluators -pilot to develop consistency in evaluations -cross-validate results with other methods
Individual or focus group interviews with students, faculty and/or employers	-face-to-face or phone dialogue used to evaluate reporting of attitudes and behaviors	-provides for individualized questions, follow-up probes, clarifications, etc. -provides immediate feedback -format decreases misunderstandings in questions and answers - allows faculty/institutional ownership and control over use and interpretation of results	-requires direct contact with individuals -interviewees may be intimidated / uncomfortable -bias due to wording and manner in which interview conducted -costly in terms of time for administration	-provide training for interviewers -interview smaller groups using proper sampling techniques -pilot test to get feedback - electronically record interviews for further evaluation -cross-validate results with other methods
Oral Exams / Presentations	-evaluation of knowledge through face-to-face dialogue	-provides opportunity for greater depth through additional questions, clarifications, etc. -format decreases misunderstandings in questions and answers -may reduce written test anxiety -can provide for both formative and summative assessment -provides assessment of student thinking and communication skills as well as knowledge -allows faculty control over use and interpretation of results	-costly in terms of time for development, administration and interpretation of results -concern for validity and reliability due to inconsistencies of administration -process may prohibit student responsiveness	-develop standard questions and follow-up probes -provide non-threatening atmosphere for testing -electronically record exam/presentation for further evaluation -cross-validate results with other methods

**Direct Methods continued**

Activity	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Portfolios	-collections of student work samples used to view learning or performance over an extended period of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-may be used to measure multiple components of a curriculum</li> <li>-encourages faculty exchange and discussion concerning curricular goals and objectives</li> <li>-economical in terms of student time and effort</li> <li>- allows faculty control over use and interpretation of results</li> <li>-results useful at course, program and institutional levels</li> <li>-minimizes situations that produce test anxiety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-costly in terms of time for training and evaluation</li> <li>-collection, grading and storing process may become problematic</li> <li>-faculty concern about the use of the results</li> <li>-concern for validity and reliability due to inconsistencies in grading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-use portfolios from representative sampling of students</li> <li>-provide training for evaluators</li> <li>-develop scoring rubrics to maintain consistency in scoring</li> <li>-use multiple evaluators to rate portfolios</li> <li>-cross validate results with other methods</li> </ul>
Projects/Term papers/Reports	-written assignments, usually requiring some research, that produce a detailed description/ discussion of a topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-geared specifically to goals, objectives and students within the course or program or institution</li> <li>-allows performance criteria to be tied to curriculum</li> <li>- allows faculty/institutional ownership and control over use of results</li> <li>-can provide for formative and summative assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-costly in terms of time for development and interpretation of results</li> <li>-more difficult to establish reliability, validity and credibility</li> <li>-no comparison norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-training should be provided for helping with construction and grading for validation</li> <li>-should be combined with other forms of assessment</li> </ul>

### Direct Methods continued

Activity	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Scoring Rubrics <a href="#">More about Rubrics</a>	-tool consisting of a set of scoring criteria and point values associated with these criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-can be used for scoring any form of student work</li> <li>- allows for student and instructor to differentiate among the categories by level of performance</li> <li>-provides established standards to compare student performance against</li> <li>-can provide holistic analysis of student responses</li> <li>-can be used for formative or summative assessment</li> </ul>	-costly in terms of time for training and for development and for the interpretation of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-most useful when scoring rubric is made available to students before test or assignment is administered</li> <li>-training should be provided for the instructors involved</li> </ul>
Service Learning	-student learning and development through active participation in organized service that is conducted in, and meets the needs of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-increases students' involvement in civic responsibilities</li> <li>-allows community organizations to expand range and quality of service(s)</li> <li>-expands and integrates community service into courses</li> <li>-strengthens community relations</li> <li>-off-sets costs to community organizations through volunteerism of students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-costly in student time spent volunteering in the community agencies</li> <li>-no apparent association between participation in course-based service learning and development of profession or academic skills</li> <li>-requires resources to support and assist faculty in implementing service learning projects</li> <li>-faculty resistance to the less rigorous pedagogical approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-needs to be formalized as part of the institutional structure to reduce vulnerability to administrative changes and budget cuts</li> <li>-requires faculty training to help promote credibility for course-based service learning</li> <li>-need to specifically identify and measure student outcomes appropriate to service learning</li> <li>-should assess the value of the institutional investments in the community</li> <li>-should be combined with other forms of assessment</li> </ul>

### Direct Methods continued

Activity	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Simulations	-activities used to approximate the results of performance when direct demonstration of skill is not possible	-allows for flexibility -can be grouped administered for certain skills -provides direct measure of skills learned	-tendency toward more subjective grading -costly in terms of equipment and time for development and implementation	-can be more standardized through computer programs -should be combined with other forms of assessment
Standardized Exams	group-administered exams where scores are compared with a reference or norm group	-easy administration and scoring -provides reduction in time for instrument development and grading -provides established external validity and reliability -allows reference group comparison -less subjectivity and bias	-usually limited to assessment of basic knowledge -may not measure outcomes specific to the program or institution -reference data dependent on comparison groups and sampling techniques -provides summative assessment only -costly in terms of purchase and scoring	-provide faculty review of instruments to determine match between exam and curriculum -review reliability and validity data for the test -create additional summary reports of results -provide cross-validation of results from other sources

### Indirect Methods

Activity	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Course evaluations	-questionnaires completed by students to measure classroom and teaching effectiveness	-provides student perception of teaching that can be used to improve teaching - allows faculty/institutional ownership and control over the use of the results -geared specifically to the particular course -easily administered and scored -conveys an interest in students' opinions	-provides for course level assessment only -positive correlation between student grades in the course and the evaluation ratings -concern for reliability and validity due to inconsistency in administration -student perceptions may be influenced by outside variables	-should contain items specific to the department and institution as opposed to just a generic form -results should be returned to the faculty in a timely manner to promote improvement

### Indirect Methods continued

Activity	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Department or program review data	- data obtained from an in-depth, comprehensive study of a department or program	-geared specifically to goals, objectives and students within the program/department -faculty/institutional ownership and control over use of results	-provides summative assessment only	-should involve department member input
Institutional Data (Annual reports, transcript studies institutional benchmarks, etc.)	-biographical or academic data available from the College's databases	-usually readily available -useful for longitudinal studies -doesn't require additional time or effort from students or faculty	-costly in terms of time needed to develop and maintain databases -caution must be taken regarding confidentiality rights -more easily available so may discourage use of other methods	-conduct a comprehensive review of existing data -use only records and data that are relevant to specific goals and objectives of the institution -ensure security and protection of records
Surveys & questionnaires of student, employer & alumni satisfaction and perceptions	-instruments designed to ask participants to share their levels of satisfaction and/or perceptions	-provides direct feedback on opinions of constituency groups -conveys a sense of value of individuals' opinions -covers a broad range of areas -results simple to report -provides ability to reach individuals who may not be involved in other assessment activities	-subject to construction and non-response bias -forced response design does not allow for expression of true opinions -subject to voluntary response bias as results represent only what individuals are willing to report -no external reference for results if developed in-house	-consult survey experts -include open-ended response questions -obtain largest sample possible -add locally developed items to commercially prepared surveys -reporting should emphasize that the results represent only perception/opinions of respondents willing to express opinions -pilot instrument when possible -cross-validate results through other methods

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