

# Tips on Improving Programmatic Assessment Reports

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Institutional Effectiveness

April 28, 2022

# What is assessment?

- ▶ Assessment is defined as the *systematic examination of curriculum and teaching practices to determine their impact on student learning.*
- ▶ The overarching goal of assessment is *reflection* and *improvement.*

# Agenda

- ▶ Using feedback to help programs improve student learning
- ▶ Good practices in assessment
- ▶ The importance of curriculum maps
- ▶ How to effectively tell your story to reviewers
- ▶ Strong use of results to improve student learning
- ▶ Closing the loop on prior year assessment
- ▶ “Target” Date
- ▶ Resources

# How can departments use the feedback to improve?

- ▶ Of all activities a faculty member and department perform related to assessment of student learning, the *discussion with peers of what the data mean to let it guide decisions for improvement is the single most valuable part of the assessment process.*

# How can departments use the feedback to improve?

## Recommendations:

- ▶ Discuss the assessment data or “results” with the department.
- ▶ Make a concrete plan or “*actionable* use of results” on how student learning might be improved during the next cycle.
- ▶ Changes to implement can be major or minor.
  - ▶ Major change examples: changes to program of study, adding SLOs to a course, etc.
  - ▶ Minor change examples: adding additional resources, dedicating additional discussion time, supplemental course materials
- ▶ *Describe* these changes to teaching methodology in the report.

# Good Practices

- ▶ Make sure to discuss how faculty was involved in the full assessment process.
  - ▶ Attach meeting notes or agendas that reflect how *most* or *all* of your faculty were in attendance when discussing decisions.
  - ▶ Use of plural language (we rather than I) communicates to reviewers that the decisions were made collectively and not by just one person.
- ▶ Have a current curriculum map and assessment plan on IE's website.
- ▶ If including supporting documentation or links, make accessible to all in the folders so reviewers will have access to the files
- ▶ Use the rubric that to help answer the questions to know where reviewers will be looking for information.

# The Importance of Curriculum Maps

- ▶ Curriculum maps describe how the courses in the program of study support the program level student learning outcomes.
- ▶ The better curriculum maps:
  - ▶ Show that all required courses support student attainment of each learning outcome. (Gaps or deficiencies indicate a need to examine the program of study. This type of change might mean documenting these changes in the next CCR cycle.)
  - ▶ Are a useful tool to departments to indicate opportunities for assessing student learning outcomes.
  - ▶ Allows departments to consider assessing “in the middle of a program” rather than at the end.
  - ▶ Can support “scaffolding of knowledge” through notations such as Introduction, Reinforcement, and Mastery.

# Tell your story

- ▶ Do not assume the reviewers will know anything about your program or department. Provide as much information as possible to external reviewers. You have space on both the executive summary tab and the assessment tab, as well the ability to submit supplemental documents.
  - ▶ How many faculty participated in the assessment conversations?
  - ▶ How will you communicate assessment findings and use of results to stakeholders? (full-time and part-time faculty, students, advisory groups, etc.)
  - ▶ Student population?
  - ▶ How is the program delivered? Is it online, face-to-face, or both. Is it offered in multiple locations? How are these locations and modalities accounted for in your assessment practices?
- ▶ Include rubrics, meeting notes or details, or agendas help communicate your department's assessment practices to the reviewers.



# Strong use of results - Examples

- ▶ Be specific.
- ▶ Your response should be **action-oriented**.
  - ▶ What changes will the faculty make to teaching or curriculum to improve student learning?
  - ▶ Example: *All of the faculty in the department met to reflect on these assessment findings at our annual assessment retreat. Faculty discussed the results as well as their own experiences with student written work. They voted to create a standardized professional/technical writing style communication checklist for written assignments and use that throughout courses in the curriculum.*
- ▶ Report actions taken to Improve Student Learning rather than plans to improve assessment.
  - ▶ Improving assessment is important, but not how we should answer this question.
  - ▶ Example: *Faculty discussed the assessment data and approved the following:...Use WeBWork for extra problems and workshop problems. Announce and encourage the workshops in each lecture. Compare workshop attendance over sections to determine which slots received the most attendance. Schedule weekly workshops accordingly..*

# Strong use of results

- ▶ Provide evidence of seeking improvement to student learning.
  - ▶ **Incremental Changes count.** Changes do not have to be “grand” or “sweeping”.
    - ▶ *Faculty require students to produce technical journals documenting project work as part of the IT Internship course which is required in the program. While program faculty determined that most students (83% of those assessed) had met the standard, further review of journal entries prompted discussion among faculty about the nature of students' journal entries. While faculty acknowledged that students were able to use technical language, the students would benefit from better organization within their journals. Faculty determined to place more emphasis on organization, reflection, and visualization or mapping of journal entries in future sections taught of this course.*
    - ▶ *We did not achieve our goal of 70% of the students scoring a 70% or higher on this assignment. For many of the students there was a lack of detail and description on their ability to identify and resolve ethical dilemmas. Our goal moving forward will now be to incorporate more case studies as examples, but also to discuss this case study in more detail going over what the appropriate answers and response would be to these ethical dilemmas with the hope that the outcomes will increase.*

# Closing the loop on assessment

- ▶ Make comparisons across multiple assessment cycles
  - ▶ 5-Year Assessment Plans are a great tool for remembering “when to reassess.”
  - ▶ Comparison to a prior year in concrete terms is useful.
- ▶ Example of closing the loop
  - ▶ *Student success in this area improved significantly since last year: from 76% to 94% meeting or exceeding expectations. The major errors we identified included inconsistent use of sentence case for APA sources and improper use of italics and quotation marks across all citation methods. Since these are easily identifiable and remedied, we plan to highlight these points specifically to students next year to ensure they are not making the same mistakes.*

# Closing the loop on assessment cont.

- ▶ Another example
  - ▶ *At 74% of students meeting or exceeding the criteria for this assessment, this is the first year that student learning for this outcome has exceeded the 70% benchmark. Departmental faculty have emphasized pseudocode and program design by offering more in-depth discussions and detailed lessons on the finer points of program design and how pseudocode can shorten the time between program design, testing, and implementation. Program faculty have decided to continue with this emphasis and to further implement a case study approach with students that we hope will result in even more students meeting or exceeding our expectation on this learning outcome.*

# When are assessment reports due?

- ▶ Target date for submission is June 30, 2022... but we are flexible!
- ▶ However, if your department wishes to meet in early August to discuss the “actionable use of results,” simply let us know a date in August when you can submit your report.
- ▶ Please do not submit a report if your department has not met to discuss the “use of results to improve student learning” portion of the report. Please consider holding the report to capture this conversation and let us know when you can submit after June 30<sup>th</sup>.

# Resources

- ▶ IE is available for the following:
  - ▶ One-on-one consultations
  - ▶ Department meetings to discuss assessment in general terms or specific situations for your departments working with setting this up with each college
  - ▶ Contact Angela Bryan at [abryan@uwf.edu](mailto:abryan@uwf.edu)
  - ▶ Or Carolyn Beamer at [cbeamer@uwf.edu](mailto:cbeamer@uwf.edu)