Assessment at Northeast Lakeview College

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Although I have been working in the area of evaluation and assessment for some time, it didn’t come easily. Indeed, I think I can say I came to it with some resistance. Perhaps it was a reaction to so much of the early work that seemed to privilege tests. Perhaps it was the evidence of the limitations of standardized testing, especially high stakes testing, for the assessment of learning or anything. Perhaps it was my sense that talking about assessment and evaluation to groups of academics and administrators was a little like talking about a root canal.
Institutional Effectiveness:
Its purpose is to integrate assessment, planning and institutional research.

1. It requires a systematic and ongoing process of collecting, analyzing and acting on data and information relating to the goals and outcomes developed to support a college's mission and purpose.

2. Its responsibility is to measure results and ensure use of results to aid in decision-making and improvement.

3. It involves cyclical activities so that the college works toward ‘continuous improvement’
Value Added

- What claims does the college make about the value of an NLC education?
- How are they supported? Is the evidence credible?
- What evidence is there that the college is committed to continuous improvement?
Assessment is not measurement. Assessment is a process, that includes looking at our students’ learning, determining what strengths and weaknesses are present in the performances relative to what we hoped to see and then deciding what to do to improve their learning, if that seems necessary. (p. 45)
Question 1

What is one pedagogical strategy that you did not use when you began teaching but you believe enhances student learning?
Assessment is not new:

- Assessment is undergoing a paradigm shift from psychometrics to a broader model of educational assessment, from a testing and examination culture to an assessment culture. (Gipps, 1994)

- Good assessment now is that which most closely reflects desired learning outcomes and in which the process of assessment has a beneficial influence on the learning culture. (Boud, 1995)

- Rather than assessment being something you do to people, it is an interactive activity between students and teacher that can play an important role in providing feedback, the aim of which is to improve the quality of future learning. (Willis, 1993)
The Four-Column Report

- Outcome
- Assessment method
- Results
- Use of results or improvement needed
Triangulation

- Assumes no measure is fool-proof;
- If you have multiple measures you can look at whether they point to the same inference;
- If they do, that’s positive feedback;
- If they don’t, it’s time to rethink your assumptions, measures, inferences, etc.
What’s wrong with this picture?
How not to do assessment
Three “assessments”

- Course evaluations (Prof gets ranking averaging above 3 on 5 point scale)
- Grades (80% of students earn As and Bs)
- Major Field Test (students will average above the 50th percentile)
Recruit better students
# Learning vs. Operational or Program Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Operational Outcome</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive skills - critical thinking, reflective thought</td>
<td>Tracking – number of students served, number and type of appointments with students, number of advisees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge acquisition – Subject matter mastery</td>
<td>Satisfaction – Level of satisfaction with the services provided, whether student or community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal development – values, identity, self-esteem, maturity</td>
<td>Cost effectiveness - Are the benefits worth the cost?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal development – Understanding and appreciating differences, ability to relate to others.</td>
<td>Needs – Are the courses offered consistent with what students are requesting?, does availability of courses meet the demand?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practical competence – career preparation, economic self-sufficiency, and managing one’s personal affairs</td>
<td>Materials and equipment – Are they adequate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic responsibility – Responsibilities as a citizen in a democratic society and commitment to democratic ideals</td>
<td>Reduction in errors – Have accuracy and efficiency improved?</td>
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</tbody>
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## Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standardized exams</td>
<td>Written surveys and questionnaires</td>
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<td>Locally developed exams</td>
<td>Exit or other interviews</td>
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<td>Embedded questions</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>External examiner</td>
<td>Student records</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral exams</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Minute papers</td>
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<td>Portfolios (w/ rubrics)</td>
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<td>Behavioral observations</td>
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<td>Simulations (e.g., mock interviews)</td>
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<td>Project evaluations</td>
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<td>Performance appraisal</td>
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</table>
Elements of a good assessment plan

- What you do should be:
  - Meaningful
  - Manageable
  - Sustainable

- Answers questions of how the outcome will be assessed -- by whom; how, when and how often data will be collected; who will reflect on and document results and use of results.
Don’t confuse grades and assessments
Difference between a grade and an assessment

1. Assessment should ask an open-ended question -- one for which multiple answers are possible;

2. A grade must be defensible (I know why I gave you a B instead of an A);

3. Assessment is by definition formative, grading is summative (though it can be formative as well).

4. That does not mean you cannot do assessment while you are grading.
“I teach, I grade, we’re good” doesn’t work
Kinds of assessment of what students do

- Multi-method approaches are most helpful (e.g., focus groups, interviews, surveys, repeated measures, embedded essays etc.)
- Direct vs. indirect methods
- Indirect methods can be very helpful in benchmarking and contextualizing data.
What makes assessment interesting?

- Nuanced
- Authentic
- Consensual
- Valid
- Useful
- Exportable
In assessment, achieving your goal is not necessary, as long as you have a plan for improving learning.
NLC General Education Outcomes

- Critical Thinking Skills
- Communication Skills
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills
- Teamwork (different points of view, work toward shared purpose or goal)
- Personal Responsibility (ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making)
- Social Responsibility (intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities)
Question 2

Which of these general education outcomes do you achieve in your courses?
## Curriculum mapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course 100</th>
<th>101</th>
<th>135</th>
<th>201</th>
<th>250</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking skills</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I, D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral communication skills</td>
<td>I, D</td>
<td>I, D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Written communication skills</td>
<td>I, D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D, M</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team work</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I, D</td>
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What challenges will you face?

- Heterogeneity of students in your classroom;
- Heterogeneity of students’ plans when they leave NLC;
- Fewer courses with prerequisites and sometimes the prerequisite was met elsewhere;
- Few opportunities for program meetings – when can all faculty be in one place at one time?
Triangulation – CCSSE, General Education Outcomes, Course-based Assessment
Oral Communication Skills

CONGRATULATIONS. THAT WAS THE MOST OBSCURE, RAMBLING, BORING PRESENTATION I'VE EVER SEEN.

THANKS. I USE POWERPOINTLESS.
Basics of a Rubric: Oral Communications Skills Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Exemplary or very good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Not acceptable</th>
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AAC&U VALUE Rubric Project

“[The project] builds on a philosophy of learning assessment that privileges multiple expert judgments of the quality of student work. . . “

They add:

“Learning develops over time and should become more complex and more sophisticated as students move through their curricular and co-curricular pathways toward a degree.”
A 3X3 Matrix is best

- Ineffective
- Adequate
- Effective
- Outstanding

Adequate and effective could be one cell

Organization Extensiveness Presentation Style

Presentation and style could be one cell
Outstanding Organization

Speaker’s introduction captures audience attention, then speaker uses effective transitions and supplemental material to enhance listeners’ comprehension, and delivers a conclusion that summarizes well.

Always fill in the Outstanding Cell 1st
Outstanding Extensiveness

Speaker exhibits impressive range and quality of knowledge, citing and critiquing research.
Outstanding Delivery

Eye contact is effectively established; gestures and paralinguistic cues reinforce important ideas; no excessive use of vocalized pauses; time is well managed; PowerPoint is well-designed.
Outstanding Style

Speaker uses language and a tone that engage and sustain the interest of listeners.
Rubric for rubrics

- Clarity of criteria
- Distinction between levels
- Reliability of scoring
- Clarity of expectations/guidance to learners
- Support of metacognition (Awareness of learning)
- Engagement of learners in rubric development and use

(modified from Dr. Bonnie Mullinix
http://its.monmouth.edu/facultyresourcecenter/Rubrics/A%20Rubric%20for%20Rubrics.htm)
Notice what the rubric for rubrics suggests

- Include learners in rubric development
- Use the rubric as a teaching and learning tool
- Tailor the rubric to this class
- Fill in cells using data from this assignment – how do these students typically miss the mark
- Expect to modify the rubric over time
Choose assessment strategies that you find intellectually interesting.

Whether you achieve outcomes is less critical to SACS than that you are continually working to enhance student learning.

You are doing assessment already – just figure out a way to write it down.

Best wishes!