# Assessment Quarterly

INAUGURAL EDITION

The Assessment Updater is a quarterly look at how assessment integrates into the St. Philip's College culture to create a holistic approach to supporting student learning at all levels. The Assessment Updater focuses on the language of assessment, key concepts in assessing student and programmatic outcomes, and ideas for sharing with faculty and staff to improve the overall student experience. Future Assessment Updaters will focus on how to create rubrics, signpost/signature assignments, and how to establish Assessment Work Groups.

DECEMBER 2021 QUARTERLY FOCUS

In the December 2021 edition, the focus is on the key terms and concepts used in assessment as well as a few assessment tips and resources that the SPC community can use to tailor assessment to meet the needs of each Division.
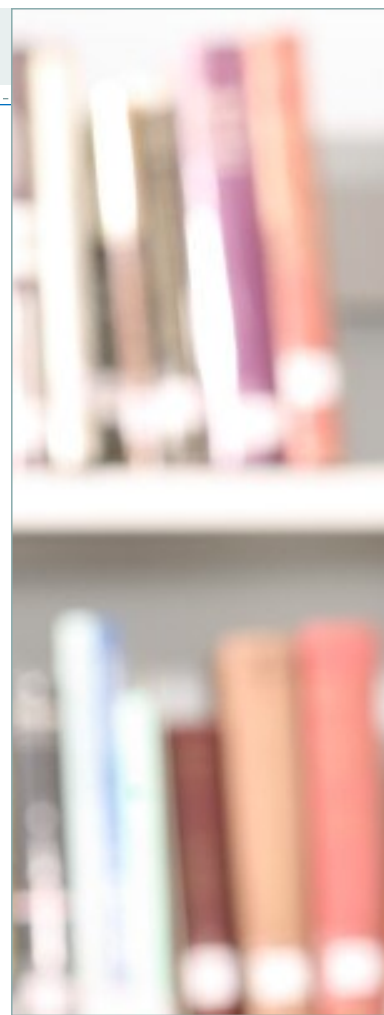
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Assessment Cycle
- Focus on PSLOs

KEY TERMS IN ASSESSMENT

New to assessment? Each month we will feature key terms in assessment to help you learn the common vocabulary used in assessment.

Formative Assessment: Informal activities used to monitor student learning, like observations, pop quizzes, minute papers or tasks, and diagnostic hands-on work that provide feedback to monitor student learning.

Summative Assessment:

Formal activities that occur at the end of a unit of study or a course to benchmark student progress against a set standard.

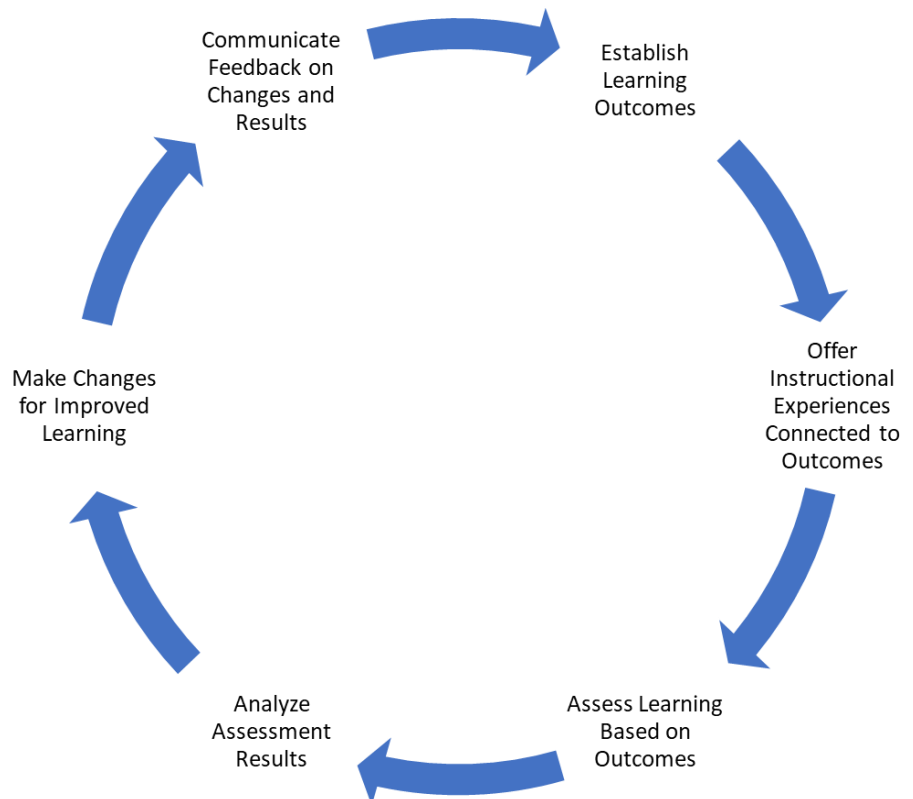— *Eberly Center for Teaching & Learning, Carnegie Mellon University*

The assessment cycle links easily to strategic planning, budgeting, and resource allocation in SPOL.

THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE

The assessment cycle is a process that uses continuous improvement for both curricular and co-curricular activities in an effort to review initiatives, gain support for new learning and/or curricular strategies, address programmatic changes to better meet disciplinary or industry needs, and then to share this data with everyone in the college community.
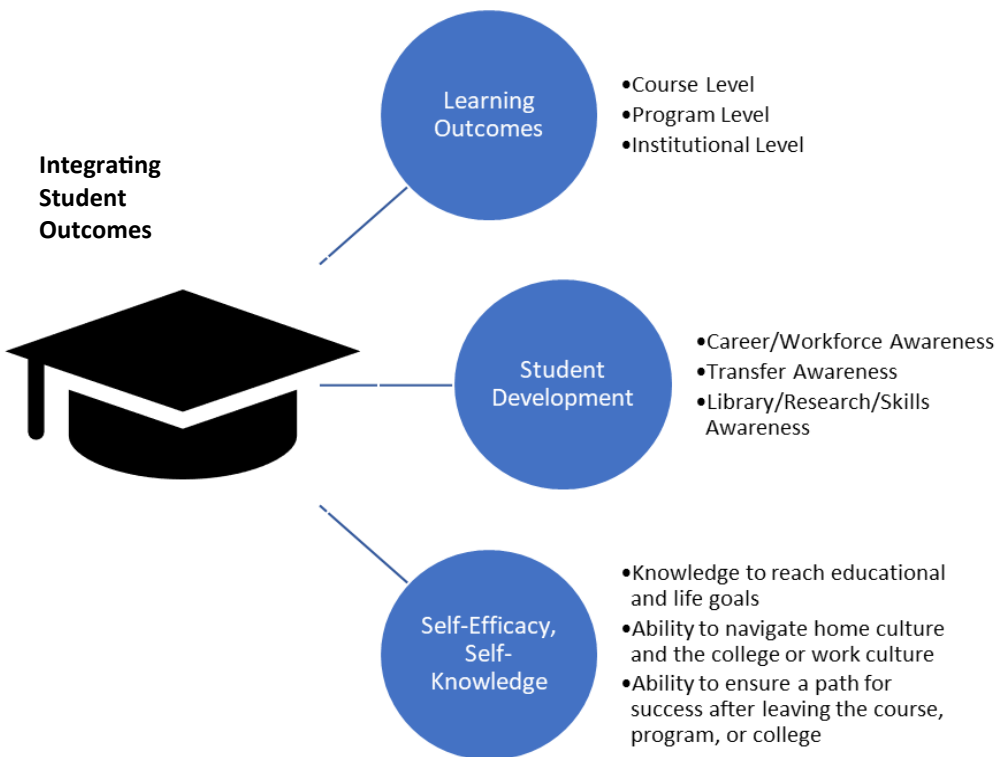
Also, the assessment cycle links easily to strategic planning, budgeting, and resource allocation. By integrating the assessment cycle with SPOL, Divisions can develop better informed decision-making for their programs and services.

THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE

Communicate Feedback on Changes and Results → Establish Learning Outcomes → Offer Instructional Experiences Connected to Outcomes → Assess Learning Based on Outcomes → Analyze Assessment Results → Make Changes for Improved Learning → (back to Communicate Feedback on Changes and Results)

LINKING ASSESSMENT TO PROGRAM REVIEW

Integrating Student Outcomes

Learning Outcomes
- Course Level
- Program Level
- Institutional Level

Student Development
- Career/Workforce Awareness
- Transfer Awareness
- Library/Research/Skills Awareness

Self-Efficacy, Self-Knowledge
- Knowledge to reach educational and life goals
- Ability to navigate home culture and the college or work culture
- Ability to ensure a path for success after leaving the course, program, or college

5 STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT PLAN

1. THINK ABOUT THEN ASK THE QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT'S PROGRAMS AND HOW STUDENTS LEARN IN THOSE PROGRAMS

2. REVIEW PROGRAM OUTCOMES TO BE SURE THESE ARE THE OUTCOMES STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN

3. REVIEW STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ALL COURSES TO BE SURE THESE ARE THE OUTCOMES STUDENTS NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE PROGRAM

4. CONDUCT A 'REVERSE DESIGN' PROCESS TO WORK BACKWARD FROM OUTCOMES TO ASSIGNMENTS – THIS ALLOWS EVERYONE THE ABILITY TO SEE HOW THE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS CONNECT.

5. BUILD FACULTY-DESIGNED RUBRICS FOR KEY (SIGNATURE) ASSIGNMENTS

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes are action-oriented statements of intended learning and development that are expressed from the students' perspective. These outcomes describe what the student will know or be able to do as a result of a specific learning experience. Three types of student learning outcomes (SLOs) are course, program, and institutional.

Course Student Learning Outcomes describe a student's knowledge and abilities as a result of completing a specific course.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) describe a student's knowledge and abilities as a result of completing a specific degree plan.

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) describe institutional graduates' knowledge and abilities as a result of completing any program at the college.

SPOTLIGHT ON PSLOS

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) describe a student's knowledge and abilities as a result of completing a specific degree plan. Attributes include:

- Established by program directors/coordinators/faculty

- Define intended student learning (knowledge, abilities, and skills) developed through the process of completing a specific program

- Specific, measurable, student-focused, and action-oriented

- Clearly defined to avoid unnecessary subjectivity or ambiguity;

for example, a program should define terms such as "professionalism" within the context of the specific program

- Program-specific skills and knowledge should be refined from introduced to mastery over the entirety of the program

- While these outcomes are not specific to one course, often they will be addressed in many courses throughout the program

STEP 1: ESTABLISHING PSLOS

For many programs, establishing PSLOs starts with identifying the source. Sources that may inform program student learning outcomes include:

- Program's mission statement and description

- Programmatic accrediting standards

- Industry requirements

- Compiled course outcomes may reveal trends for overarching program-level skills**

**Additional information about this strategy may be found in the Program Assessment Primer: https://alamo.instructure.com/courses/1421277/modules/items/21312087

A NOTE ON MEASURES

Measures describe the source, method, process, or tool used to determine if student learning outcomes have been achieved and explain how the outcome is tested, proven, and/or monitored. **Direct measures** provide the most accurate means of assessing student learning by giving students the opportunity to show what they have learned. **Such direct measures may include**:

- Creative and research papers

- Oral presentations and exams

- Skills demonstrations

- Portfolios of work (lab reports, artwork, papers)

- Capstone projects (senior theses, practicums, internships)

- Internships, clinical experiences (ratings from supervisors)

"Assessment is the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students. It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using information to increase students' learning and development " *(Erwin, 1991).*

Sample Program Student Learning Outcomes

- Automotive Technology—Upon program completion students will be able to apply electrical and electronic skills in diagnosing/troubleshooting and repairing malfunctions of electrical/electronic components.

- Advanced Manufacturing Technology—Students who complete the Advanced Manufacturing Technology (AMT) program will be able to design and interpret DC and AC circuits, utilize electronic tools such as digital multi-meters and oscilloscope, and troubleshoot/evaluate related electrical components found in automated systems.

- Early Childhood and Family Studies—Upon completion of the Early Childhood and Family Studies program, candidates will be able to use their understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our next Assessment Updater will introduce rubric development and styles. Topics to include:

- Analytic rubrics

- Binary rubrics

- Holistic rubrics