Assessment Overview
and
Developing Learning Outcomes

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Assessment Retreat

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Retreat Goals

Participants will:

• have a clearer understanding of the assessment process
• understand how assessment is useful to themselves
• be able to write reports that capture this clearer understanding of assessment
What Is Assessment?

• A process for:
  • Identifying learning outcomes, at program and course levels
  • Selecting appropriate strategies and places in the curriculum to foster outcomes
  • Developing valid and reliable measures and locations in the curriculum to determine if outcomes are achieved or progress is being made toward outcome achievement
What Is Assessment?

• A process for:
  
  • Analyzing measurement data to evaluate progress toward or achievement of outcomes
  • Deciding upon strategies/activities/modification to courses when achievement is less than expected
  • Evaluating if these strategies are successful
Overview of Assessment Process

Select or develop measurable student learning outcomes

Make adjustments in curriculum and/or teaching and learning strategies to address weaknesses and strengths

Academic Assessment Process

Identify classes, instructional strategies, assignments, and activities to foster outcomes

Select or develop measures that are able to provide information about outcome achievement and progress

Analyze assessment results

Measure student learning outcomes
Reasons for Engaging in Assessment to you personally

- Demonstrate our active commitment to outstanding teaching
- Provide meaningful evidence of strong teaching skills to chairs, deans, and the institution – more powerful than student ratings and syllabai
- Can be included as a portion of research portfolio-Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Reasons for Engaging in Assessment to students and programs

• Helps identify needed changes in the curriculum, such as additional emphasis of some topics,– keeping programs up-to-date

• Helps focus on students as a group in our programs, in addition to individual students

• Helps develop and ensure a cohesive curriculum

• Helps maximize student learning
Nine Principles of Assessment

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values and the institution’s mission.
2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
5. Assessment should be ongoing, not episodic.
Nine Principles of Assessment cont’d

6. Assessment fosters broader improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.

7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.

8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change: that is, the institution is learning-centered.

9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

Five Contributors to a Successful Learning/Assessment Environment

1. Placement of value on assessment (to help maximize student learning)
2. Provision of resources and time to engage in the assessment process
3. Commitment to organizational learning (the institution has the mechanisms and attitude to explore difficult questions, allows those knowledgeable to address the questions and solve the problems, and genuinely wants to learn and improve)
Five Contributors to a Successful Learning/Assessment Environment cont’d

4. Motivation of primary program users to contribute to assessment (motivation of faculty and administrators to actively engage in the assessment processes) and

5. Willingness and ability of primary users to receive the necessary training to participate in assessment (openness and motivation of faculty and administrators involved with assessment to participate in assessment and development opportunities)

Mission Statement

- A succinct statement that captures the institution’s/program’s distinct character

- It shapes the nature, scope, and boundaries of the goals, activities, and curricula
Mission Statement

• Describes why an institution or program exists. For example:
  • To improve the health of the surrounding community
  • To advance scientific understanding
  • To prepare responsible citizens
  • To graduate individuals that will influence public policy
Structure of Mission Statement

• “The mission of (unit/program) is to (your primary purpose) by providing (your primary activities or functions) to (your stakeholders) guided by (the standards you are trying to live up to)”. Additional clarifying statements can be added as needed.
The mission of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is to support Georgia Southern University's pursuit of academic distinction in teaching, scholarship, and service in a student-centered environment by providing leadership for assessment, institutional effectiveness, planning, and accreditation activities to academic and administrative units. Guided by a dedication to a culture of systematic self-reflection, evidence-based decision-making, and improvement, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness ensures that academic, administrative, and support units engage in assessment practices that accurately and comprehensively reflect their primary functions.
Example of Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Biology B.S. degree program is to (1) prepare graduates for employment in various biology-related areas and (2) to be prepared to pursue advanced degrees in biology or health related professions by providing an education to students in the fundamental concepts, knowledge, and laboratory/field techniques and skills of the life sciences.
Checklist for Mission Statement

• Is it brief?
• Is it distinctive of your program?
• Does it state the purpose of your program?
• Does it indicate primary function or activities?
• Does it identify your stakeholders?
• Does it identify the standards you are trying to uphold?
• Does it clearly support the mission of the college and the institution?
Assessment Process and Learning Outcomes

Institutional Level – Program and General Education

• Program assessment will have program-level learning outcomes

• Course level outcomes should relate to program level outcomes
Develop Measurable Student Learning Outcomes that Align with Mission

- At the completion of the Course or Program (Summative) –
  - What students know and what can they do with this knowledge
  - Implies attention to the depth of learning rather than content coverage

- Making progress toward summative outcomes
  - Enabling developmental or formative outcomes
Outcomes and Goals/Objectives

• Goals/Objectives - generally over-arching and may be at the program or institutional levels – what we’ll do

• Outcomes – more specific and are clearly measurable (observable) – what students can do
Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes

“Program objectives” address in broad terms what the student will learn and/or value from the program.

Objectives:

- provide guidance.
- are too vague to be measured directly.

For example, “Students will learn to think critically.”
“Students will evaluate claims made in articles selected from varying types of periodicals and accurately judge the adequacy of supporting documentation.”
Institutional Outcome/Objective

• Students will demonstrate the critical thinking skills of analysis and evaluation in the general education curriculum and in the major.

Course Outcome

• At the completion of EDU 4015, students will analyze multiple choice tests by appropriately evaluating difficulty, discrimination indices, and distractors and will interpret the results for assessment purposes.
Revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain

Analysis/Analyzing

Application/Applying

Comprehension/Understanding

Knowledge/Remembering

Evaluation/Evaluating/Synthesis/Creating

Verbs to Use for Developing Outcomes based on Bloom’s Taxonomy (Cognitive Domain)

Level 4: Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation

discriminate plan weigh
infer organize evaluate
compare generate combine
contrast appraise conclude
create critique support
design judge

Level 3: Application

determine use an approach apply a principle
chart develop solve a problem
implement choose an appropriate relate
prepare procedure demonstrate

Level 2: Comprehension

describe estimate illustrate
generalize classify give an example of
paraphrase explain state in your own words
summarize predict translate

Level 1: Knowledge

define list name
identify match report
label recall select
state recite
Affective Domain

- Internalizing Values
- Organization
- Valuing
- Responding to Phenomena
- Receiving Phenomena
Outcome Statements

• Are specific and understandable by multiple audiences
• Include which students, at what point in the curriculum
• May include conditions or qualifiers, as in the critical thinking outcome
Workshop Outcome

At the completion of the outcomes construction workshop, participants will be able to construct measurable student learning outcomes which include:

- Statements about what learners will know and be able to do
  - these statements are specific and understandable by multiple audiences
- which students, at what point in the curriculum
- conditions or qualifiers.
Objectives/Outcomes Activity

• Students will communicate effectively

• Students will understand how social scientists conduct research

• Students will use quantitative reasoning skills to solve discipline-specific problems
Communication Skills Outcome

“Students completing the general education curriculum will demonstrate competence in written communication using varying modes, such as narration, argumentation, description, and persuasion. They use appropriate language, conventions, organization, supporting evidence, and content appropriate to the purpose and audience.”

Adapted from Winston-Salem State University
Outcomes Statements Should Include:

- Who and when?
  - Which students?
  - What level in the program?

- What these students will know and be able to do?
  - Specifically defined using concrete action verbs in explicit observable terms*

*Adapted from Suskie, L. *Assessing Student Learning*. 2009.
Program and Course Outcomes Activity

• Using your own list of program and course outcomes, review them for clarity and specificity
  • Revise them, as needed
• Determine linkages between your course outcomes and program outcomes
• For a specific course in your program-
  • Determine which program outcomes are applicable.
  • Determine if these are appropriate as written or if they must be adapted to the course. If needed, adapt.
• Share with the table
Next Step in the Assessment Process

Align outcomes with the curriculum and instruction