

Assessment Exemplars

How is the WSC Outcomes Assessment Process Improving Student Learning?

The following exemplars were identified from the 2009-2010 assessment reports and represent a small sampling of the many uses of assessment processes being used for improvement of student learning.

- To improve writing, the history faculty are making a concerted effort to require research papers in more courses required by all majors.
- To improve communication skills, a CJA Communications course is being designed and proposed. It was noted that our largest feeder school has implemented a similar course.
- One department noted they would like to see more improvement in the area of competency with research skills. They are currently working on a curriculum map to identify courses with oral presentation of paper/project to determine where additional skill development might be implemented.
- One department had students participate in a focus group with program faculty to discuss learning in the major and were encouraged to make suggestions for improvement. Discussions were held on student learning in their major and the perception of their preparedness for post graduation success. The faculty have determined a need to assist students in developing an understanding of the value of professionalism and respect to develop as citizens and professionals.
- To increase the response rate, one department will change the method of distributing the student exit survey. Instead of mailing the surveys out to the students after a period of time, the survey will be included in the final paperwork for their capstone internship and will be required for them to send in before a grade is posted.
- One program is looking to expand study-abroad opportunities. To improve student's reading ability, a "bridge" reading course between the intermediate and advanced courses has been determined to be offered more frequently.
- A department embeds a short questionnaire at the end of the comprehensive exam to increase the rate of reporting. Instead of contacting each student individually for plans after graduating from WSC, they collect the same information on paper when each student completes the comprehensive exam.
- The Comprehensive Psychology Exam will be reduced to 100 questions for use this year making it more manageable to administer. The shorter exam should also reduce the likelihood of students becoming bored or fatigued while taking the exam, which could have contributed to lower than expected performance on the latter half of the exam.
- One program determined the need to standardize writing expectations throughout the program. Discussion on using Turabian, *A Pocket Guide*, or some other writing handbook based on the Chicago Manual of Style was held.

What are Undergraduate Programs Learning from Outcomes Assessment?

The following exemplars were identified from the 2009-2010 assessment reports and represent a small sample of the many insights gleaned from assessing student learning.

- One department is making adjustments to the pre-test and post-test administration procedures to increase the students' perceived level of importance assigned to the tests. Each test will play a larger role in the students' course grade.
- Based upon student surveys, one department plans to revisit selected concentrations and majors to explore possibilities for redesign, within the constraints of budget and staffing, of their academic programs.
- Faculty visited with the Library and requested the Communication and Mass Media Database be ordered for student use in writing their research papers. Faculty found this to be invaluable and desire to keep the subscription. More writing development will occur in several courses. The development of the Nebraska Undergraduate Research Conference will allow students to demonstrate their analysis and writing ability.
- A department decided to modify the internship evaluation form to clarify that Writing Skills refers to tasks involved in many internships. Therefore it will now be listed as "Writing Skills/Records/Charting." In addition, a culminating course has added an assignment that may be common for interns, a discharge summary. The discharge summary will be evaluated for content and writing skills on a 4 point rubric. Students below the minimum of two on the rubric will be expected to participate in remediation sessions with the Writing Help Desk. Therefore, identification of deficiencies in writing skills may be identified much earlier than in the past with the PPST Writing Test. This will encourage the use of the Writing Help Desk early in one's college career. It may also enhance the application of remediation skills to additional courses prior to internship, solidifying any improvements that are made.
- Students were able to make open ended comments about what the department has done best and what could be improved. Students indicated the department has created an environment conducive to learning. Students indicated they feel challenged and are encouraged to act in a professional manner.

What do the Education Assessment Folios Report on Student Learning?

The following exemplars were identified from the 2009-2010 assessment folios from the School of Education and Counseling and represent a small sample of the many insights gleaned from assessing student learning.

- Based on the Key Assessments and findings, candidates in the Art Education program are exceeding expectations. Through the continual development of the Department of Art and Design Assessment process, the department can assess the overall curriculum program and then guide the individual students' development in skill and technical proficiency; problem solving and critical thinking skills; competency in various media; aesthetic growth and formalism; synthesizing of content/context/subject matter; visual presentations of work; oral presentation and written communication. The Department formally assesses each student at the sophomore and senior level. The Sophomore Review level identifies areas of content for faculty (all art department faculty are involved in the reviews) to address curriculum strengths and deficiencies which leads to curriculum implementation changes in future art classes. Changes in curriculum as a result of the department's assessment plan include addressing in the foundation courses more gesture drawing and increased media and color applications in drawing courses. The Sophomore Review also provides information about areas that individual students may need to strengthen (additional coursework, repeating courses, developing strength in certain areas by working with tutors, the writing-help desk and other programs available on campus to assist students). At the Sophomore Review it becomes more evident if a student needs to make major changes within the department, i.e. to pursue art education, graphic design or studio arts. Academic Policies approved the department to offer a non-credit class registration with a grade of "Pass/Fail" for the Sophomore

Review and Senior Review. Requirements and expectations for all students to formalize the process will begin with the 2009-2010 General and Graduate Catalog.

- The Early Childhood Unified assessment report stated: as a result of the analysis of the data from the Survey of Recent Teacher Education Graduates, it is affirmed that the scope and direction of the teacher education programs is preparing quality first-year teachers. Recent graduates suggested to continue Wayne State College's commitment to smaller class sizes, significant interactions between faculty and students, embedding of practical "hands-on" methods experiences, classroom management courses that develop philosophy along with applicable preventions and interventions, offering APL Level I as an elective course, and maintaining faculty interest in students' lives beyond the classroom. In order to continue our high level of quality, suggestions from all respondents (not just Early Childhood Unified candidates) include providing all candidates additional background in curriculum and assessment, instructional design and delivery methods, classroom management, communicating with parents, and instruction on using technology. Suggestions for elementary and middle level candidates include additional instruction in teaching reading and for ELL endorsees additional instruction in English grammar. Lastly, a final suggestion was that all candidates graduate as highly qualified under the No Child Left Behind guidelines.
- Based on the data from Key Assessments and departmental discussions that have been held it is concluded that candidates seeking Language Arts Education endorsements are doing well. Changes that have been made are the addition of a Teacher Work Sample for student teaching and the substitution of ENG 480 Senior Seminar for a course no longer required by Rule 24 for the Language Arts endorsement. The course to be dropped has not yet been determined, but it will probably be ENG 200 Expository Writing since Rule 24 standard *006.36D:D, knowledge and understanding of different composing processes*, is met by a number of other courses. The Teacher Work Sample will provide concrete evidence of student achievement. ENG 480 Senior Seminar is the capstone course required for all English majors, including English Endorsement candidates. It is the department's primary means of assessment. Faculty members evaluate student presentations and research papers and candidates complete an assessment survey. In providing courses that met all previous state requirements for the Language Arts Endorsement, we were not able to include ENG 480 and keep the program to 66 hours. Note: Beginning with the 2009-2010 *General and Graduate Catalog*, ENG 480 is a requirement for the Language Arts Endorsement as well.

Summary

Wayne State College is building a culture of outcomes assessment across the institution through a systematic method of outcomes assessment. This systematic method of assessment documents assessment results and provides evidence that the results are used for continuous improvement of programs and services. Assessment at WSC will continue to expand and improve these processes through which student learning is examined and used to cultivate a strong culture of assessment.