INTRODUCTION TO ASSESSMENT AT DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

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Name?
Title?
Where do you work?
How are you involved in assessment at DePaul?
By the end of the workshop, participants will:

• Have a basic understanding of assessment, including its definition, levels of assessment and types of assessment

• Know how program-level assessment is structured at DePaul, including the sources DePaul uses to create structure and guidelines for assessment

• Know how DePaul assesses student learning by program and institutionally.
Workshop Outline

Part 1: Introduction to Assessment

Part 2: Guiding and Structuring Program-Level Assessment at DePaul

Part 3: Assessment at DePaul University
An Introduction to Assessment
Assessment and You
“Assessment is the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about student learning.”


Key: Direct Tie to Student Learning

What Assessment Isn’t: Evaluation by the Institution (of the program, faculty, or staff); Grades
Difference between Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment
– purpose = assurance of quality; continuous improvement
  • process (conceptually, no end)

Evaluation
– purpose = make value judgments (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, directions for future)
  • focus on product

Individual units may use assessment results in evaluation, but institution does not use assessment reports in this way
## Difference between Grades & Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal is to make a single judgment of student performance across entire course</td>
<td>Goal is to determine how well students are mastering an expected learning outcome(s) throughout their program</td>
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<td>Lump together all outcomes/objectives learning and non-learning to create one judgment of student performance</td>
<td>Explicitly focuses on one or more defined program learning outcomes to determine how well students are learning that outcome(s), then make improvements (based on theory of continuous improvement)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Includes elements not related to what students learned (ex. extra credit, deductions for unexcused absences)</td>
<td>Does not include elements other than student learning tied to the program’s defined learning outcomes.</td>
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Grades are course-level evaluation; cannot sum them to arrive at program level assessment - our programs are greater than the sum of their parts
Course Level: Unit of Analysis is Individual Student Learning

Program Level: Unit of Analysis is Program-Wide Student Learning

Department/Unit Level: Unit of Analysis is learning of all students within the department or unit

College/Division Level: Unit of Analysis is learning of all students within the college or division

Institutional Level: Unit of Analysis is learning of all DePaul students
Our Focus Today

Frame of Reference for this Workshop:

Program-Level Assessment

Course-level assessment workshops available through TLCP (Teaching & Learning Certificate Program)

We will briefly touch on institution-level assessment at the end
Types of Assessment

Summative

Formative

Developmental

*this is not a comprehensive list*
Summative Assessment

**Purpose:** to make a single evaluative judgment regarding performance.

Exams are summative for **Students**

**Timing:** at the end of a process
Purpose: to give feedback to allow for improvement.

Timing: while a process is occurring

**All Program-Level Assessment is Formative for the Program Conducting the Assessment**
Purpose: to determine how well students are developing certain skills or competencies – generally based on a theory of development (ex. global citizenship; multiculturalism)

*Especially useful when no expectation students can or will fully develop a skill or competency during program

Timing: throughout process – frequently assessment performed multiple times
Primary Reason: Because We Care

Secondary: Accreditation
Questions about Assessment Introduction?
Part 2

Guiding and Structuring Program-Level Assessment at DePaul
Reauthorization of Higher Education Act in 2008 maintained that responsibility for ensuring quality of higher education resides with the nation’s 6 regional accreditation bodies (up for renewal in 2014)

Do you think this is Preferable to Federal or State Government Involvement? Why or Why Not?
HLC is our regional accrediting body (largest of the 6 regional accreditors)

Why is HLC/Regional Accreditation Important?
- Required for our students to receive federal financial aid and to receive federal research funds.
- Required for students’ credits to transfer to almost any reputable higher education institution
- In most fields, required for students degrees to be recognized in the workplace
- Required for students’ degrees to be recognized by graduate schools.
- Required by many employers to provide tuition compensation to their employees

Our accreditation status is made public and speaks to our institution’s overall quality
  • Any areas of concern identified during reviews and visits may be made public as part of our statement of affiliation status (could raise concerns re. institutional and/or program quality with the public)
How does HLC evaluate DePaul?

Evaluation Based on Criteria and Associated Core Components

**HLC Criteria**

1. Mission
2. Integrity; Ethical and Responsible Conduct
3. Quality of Teaching, Resources and Support
4. Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching and Learning
5. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

From [www.ncahlc.org](http://www.ncahlc.org)
From the HLC Accreditation Criteria 4b:

**The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.**

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

4. The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

From [www.ncahlc.org](http://www.ncahlc.org)
Assessment Loop

Source: AAHE/NCA Higher Education Learning Commission

Mission/Purposes
Educational Objectives

How well do we Achieve our educational objectives?

Gather Evidence

Interpret Evidence

Enhance teaching/learning; inform institutional decision-making, planning, budgeting

Assessment Loop
Evidence of Assessment Process

How well do we achieve our educational objectives?

Mission/Purposes

Assessment Loop

Gather Evidence

Interpret Evidence

Assessment Reports describing assessment methods

Assessment Reports indicating one or more outcomes selected for assessment

Assessment Reports collected over time

Enhance teaching/learning; inform institutional decision-making, planning, budgeting

Assessment Reports that include both recommendations based on current project’s results and information about actions taken based on previous projects’ results

Assessment Reports describing how data analyzed

Source: AAHE/NCA Higher Education Learning Commission
Already know what you want students to learn; learning outcomes solidify and create common agreement on programmatic learning goals among faculty/staff

Operationalize learning goals; make measurement possible
Asking a Question about Student Learning

Faculty/Staff-driven process; should involve as many faculty/staff as possible in creating questions

Need to tie questions directly to one or more of your program’s stated learning outcomes
Selection of a method for measuring a particular learning outcome should be based on the question faculty are asking about that student learning outcome.

Should primarily use Direct Assessment methods.

- Indirect assessment may be useful as an additional methodology or post hoc to gather more information about why a program obtained certain results.
Common Assessment Methods

Direct
- Targeted Exam Questions
- Capstone or Final Projects/Papers
- Pre/Post Examinations
- Performance Assessments

Indirect
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Interviews

**Any of these methods could be direct or indirect, depending on how the assessment is structured**
Analyzing/Interpreting Results

Scoring: Assigning value to student work products

Common Methodologies
- Rubrics and Scoring Guides
- Qualitative (ethnography, critical theory, etc.)
As the name implies, scoring guides generally provide a structure and definition of how student performance will be judged.

A Scoring guide should be tied directly to the student learning outcome it is measuring.

Examples of Common Scoring Guides:

- Rubrics
- Structured Observation Guides
Making Recommendations

Interpretation of Results within the context of your program to determine how the program may improve student’s learning of intended outcomes

- Ensure direct tie to measured program learning outcome(s)

Should involve as many of a program’s faculty and staff as possible
Taking Action

Not enough to simply make recommendations, also need to make plans to take action on the recommendations.

Considerations for planning actions based on recommendations:

- **Timeline** (idea of when you may be able to implement planned actions based on your recommendations)

  - **Potential Barriers** (identify any potential barriers to implementing planned actions)
    - Examples: Program restructuring, leadership changes, lack of resources, etc.
“Closing the Loop”

Need to revisit assessment of each learning outcome regularly to look at effects of actions taken to improve program or to verify program is still meeting its learning outcomes

• Assessment should not be a “one-off”

**Especially important after major changes to the program, such as curriculum revision, program restructuring, major faculty/staff changes, etc.
Evidence for HLC

Through assessment process, university demonstrates HLC Criteria:

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

4. The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.
Beyond Compliance

We do this because we care about the quality of our curricula, programs, and instruction – to ensure students who do their due diligence have the opportunity to achieve critical knowledge, skills, and abilities from their academic programs they will need to take the next steps in their careers.

• Assessment may also be useful for internal evaluation of curriculum, courses, and instruction

• If it doesn’t matter to you, it won’t matter to HLC or TLA
Questions about Guidance for and Structure of Program-Level Assessment at DePaul?
Part 3

Assessment at DePaul
How do we use assessment to meet both internal and external demands?

DePaul has Freedom in Conducting and Providing Evidence for Assessment Loop

**This is true for HLC; requirements vary for other accreditation, certification, and licensing agencies

Assessment Advisory Board
Annual Process for Assessment Projects and Reports
- All Academic Programs
- All Student Affairs Departments
- Some other (non-Student Affairs) co-curricular programs
Each year, programs conduct an assessment of at least one program learning outcome and generate a report.
Assessment Report Template

Recently revised by Assessment Advisory Board
Part I: Follow-Up on Last Year’s Assessment Report Recommendations
Based on the recommendations and planned actions from your last assessment report, please discuss actions and/or follow-up, as well as their results.

Part II: Report on This Year’s Assessment Project
While your annual assessment project may have assessed multiple learning outcomes, this report should focus on just one program learning outcome.

Abstract
Provide a short abstract (no more than 250 words) describing the assessment project, procedures and results.

Learning Outcome Assessed
Which one of your program learning outcomes did you assess?

Data Collection and Methodology

Results

Interpretation of Results
Based on your analysis of the data, what evidence did you find for whether or not your unit’s specific learning outcomes are being met? Describe your program’s satisfaction with the results.

Recommendations and Plans for Action
Alignment Project: When complete, this will allow DePaul to use program-level assessment projects and reports to assess institutional learning goals and outcomes
Institutional Learning Goals and Outcomes

Released in October 2012; refer to handout for details

**Goal 1** Mastery of Content

**Goal 2** Intellectual and Creative Skills

**Goal 3** Personal and Social Responsibility

**Goal 4** Intercultural and Global Understanding

**Goal 5** Integration of Learning

**Goal 6** Preparation for Career and Beyond
University Learning Outcomes Alignment Project

Purpose

Determine how academic and co-curricular programs are aligned with the learning goals and outcomes released by DePaul University in October 2012.

• Allow for an institutional “picture” of how/where the university fulfills its learning goals.
  • Helps answer the question: when and where do students have an opportunity to achieve institutional goals and outcomes?

• Assist in better understanding of learning as students experience it – as an integrated and fluid whole – rather than solely focusing on disparate parts.

• Identify opportunities for collaboration/cooperation/integration based on common learning emphases in our programs (both curricular and co-curricular).
Support for Assessment at DePaul

**Course Level**
TLA – Assistant Director for Teaching Support
Teaching Commons
FITS

**College/Division Level and Program/Unit**
TLA – Associate Director for Assessment
Student Affairs – Assistant Vice President for Assessment, Planning and Communications
Assessment Representatives
Assessment Workshops and Certificate Program

**Institution Level**
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
TLA – Director or Associate Director for Assessment
Assessment’s Role in Academic Program Review (APR)

Provides evidence of student leaning for:
- Internal Program Review
- External Review

Provides inspiration for Planning/MOU Items
Assessment Certificate Program

Purpose of program is to provide support to faculty & staff engaging in program-level assessment.

Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs at DePaul University and Loyola University.

Requirements

- Complete a minimum of six assessment workshops over the course of two years.
  - All participants will need to attend an introductory workshop and a culminating workshop at their own institutions.
- Select and complete appropriate culminating project related to own work with assessment.
Questions about Assessment at DePaul?
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