Navigating Assessment Plans II: Kick-Starting Your Assessment Plan

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“... loop-closing matters far more than the specific kinds of evidence or analysis.”

Attribution:
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Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Assessment Academy mentor
Assessment How-tos

The items on this page are meant to assist you with the different steps in the assessment cycle -- from establishing learning outcomes to using data for improvement. An assessment plan documents your approach toward working through the assessment cycle.
Workshop Objectives:
• To describe example approaches (simple, efficient, effective!)
• To facilitate reflection and discussion about assessment processes
Workshop Key Outcomes: After this workshop you should be able to:

- Identify and describe at least 2 approaches;
- Modify a learned approach for your own use.
Workshop Plan:
1. Introduction
2. Example A: Oral Faculty Reports
3. Example B: Assessment Annotations
4. Time for Reflection and Discussion
5. Questions and Answers
Example A: Oral Faculty Reports

Case Study: “Most Basic, Minimal System”¹

- Political science department
- Very busy: increasing #s of majors
- Began with undergraduate major

¹ Walvoord, 2010, p. 61
The Approach:
Two-hour annual meeting
- No preparation!
- No rubrics!

1/ Walvoord, 2010, p. 61
Initial Focus of Approach:

Seniors’ research skills

- Identified 2 strengths and 2 weaknesses of research papers
- Running list on a flip-chart (could also use Word processing software)
Action Item Identified:

By Vote!

- Item: students’ ability to construct a question for inquiry in the discipline
- Repeatedly identified as a weakness
Two Action Steps:

Action #1:
Investigated where curriculum provided instruction, practice, and feedback
Action #2:
Quick, 3-question survey to seniors:

1) Self-assessment of preparation
2) Helpful strategies from their courses
3) Suggested changes
Closing the Loop:

Use of information

• Reviewed findings and made curriculum changes
• Continued to monitor student progress and identified another action item
• Maintained minutes/records
Variation of the Approach:

When 1 large meeting infeasible

• Small group meetings with 3-4 faculty
• Each group generates a list*
• Lists are aggregated by a committee, which decides on an action item

*Focus of discussion agreed upon in advance
Workshop Plan:
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Example B: Assessment Annotations

Institution:

- Lancaster Bible College
- Regional accreditation (MSCHE) and national faith-related (ABHE)
The Approach:

• Simple way to document direct evidence of student learning

• Faculty complete a short form (~ 15 minutes) after class
What is Documented:

• Basic information (e.g., course, term, program) plus:
  • Brief description of the activity
  • Student learning outcomes assessed
  • Findings and analysis of results
  • Actions to be taken
ASSESSMENT ANNOTATIONS

The Assessment Annotation is a tool faculty can use to document some of the assessment activities taking place in the classroom. By spending a few minutes in preparation before class, and then about 15 to 20 minutes soon after the class period is over, you can document that your students are indeed achieving the course's student learning outcomes. You may also be able to identify areas which need to be tweaked to increase your effectiveness in the classroom.

ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE POWERPOINT

ASSESSMENT ANNOTATION FORMS

- Assessment Annotation Form - Undergraduate
- Assessment Annotation Form - Seminary/Graduate
- Instructions for Completing Assessment Annotations (text)

Video Instructions for Completing Assessment Annotations

Video Instructions - Faculty: Saving Your Assessment Annotations
(No Audio)

First-time viewers may want to slow the speed of this video. Click on Settings at the bottom right of the video screen, and choose Playback Speed of 0.5.

SAMPLES OF COMPLETED ASSESSMENT ANNOTATIONS

- SWK 301 Organizational Social Work
- EDU 201 - 21st Century Education
- ELE 426 - Solving Literacy Difficulties
- LAN 101 - English Composition
- SOC 203 - Principles of Sociology
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Designation and Title</th>
<th>SWK 301 Organizational Social Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester/Year</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Mary Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus / Delivery Format</td>
<td>Traditional On-campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>CSW - Social Work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment Activity**

On 9/16/2012 the concept of creating mezzo level client support networks was taught through classroom lecture and reading assignment. In order to assess the effectiveness of the teaching method, a classroom assessment technique was administered.

Each student was provided with a local community newspaper and asked to locate referral opportunities for clients. Students needed to locate resources to help clients who were socially isolated. Students were given a hypothetical scenario of clients who were in need of a support network but who had failed to develop a healthy support network on their own accord. Students were to locate informal social opportunities which did not come with any stigma of being involved with social services. They were to find natural, informal resources such as a community singles group, volleyball league, book club, etc. that were free or had minimal cost.

**In assessment of Student Learning Outcome(s) [write out course objective(s) and number(s)]**

#1. Apply relevant generalist social work methods within social service organizations.

#6. Acquire knowledge and ability to assess clients on a micro, mezzo and macro level to establish appropriate treatment goals and methodology.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Briefly describe the Results of the Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ten students participated in this activity. Seven students were able to locate and justify the referral for a natural, informal mezzo level group that would enhance a client’s informal social support network. Three students selected resources that were formal social service groups that had stigma attached to them (AA, Parenting skills group run by Children &amp; Youth Agency).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis of Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximately one-third of the class did not grasp the concept of “informal” social networks at the mezzo level of intervention. They identified formal groups which attach stigma and are less likely to lead to natural and informal support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Briefly describe your Analysis of the Activity</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions to be Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor reviewed the concept of informal supports at the end of the activity. Students were able to identify their mistakes and find resources that fit the criteria. In the future, specific examples of informal versus formal resources will be given to students with additional fictitious case scenarios.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See handout for additional example (Principles of Sociology)*
Potential Focus of the Approach:

Program coordinators might ask faculty members to submit on the program outcome(s) being assessed during a particular year.
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What Questions Do You Have About Student Learning in Your Department or Program?:

- Brainstorm 1 or 2 possible questions
- Record your questions on the workshop worksheet
Possible Approaches to Your Questions:

Select one question from your list and:

• Work with a neighbor to brainstorm possible approaches to your question
• Record the ideas on your workshop worksheet
Sharing of Questions and Approaches:

What “action item” might you choose to work on in the coming year?
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Questions and Answers

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References:


*Full text available through MMA’s e-journals*