

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

DEBRA BILLINGS

Presented to the Public Administration Faculty
At the University of Michigan-Flint
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Public Administration

July 16, 2004

First Reader Albert P. Price
Second Reader Christine M. Johnson

“What is driving assessment in higher education and why do we have to do it?”

While trying to work with faculty in higher education on outcomes assessment, these are the first questions most ask. The purpose of this thesis is to explore these questions along with any other questions or difficulties faculty may have regarding outcomes assessment in higher education.

What Is Assessment?

There are many definitions for assessment. Huba and Freed (2000) define assessment as:

The process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning. (p. 8)

Likewise Baker College defines assessment as:

Communicating clear expectations or outcomes for assignments, courses, and programs and determining if these expectations or outcomes have been accomplished. Assessment is not grading or evaluating. The assessment process takes information about success in courses, programs, and processes and uses this information to improve the teaching and learning process either within the course, program, or both. The purpose of assessment is not to find fault, but to guide improvement. Assessment is not carried out to categorize or to judge, but rather to improve the quality of performance. Assessment leads to informed, data-driven changes, which then leads to more assessment. (2004)

This differs from evaluation in that Baker College defines evaluation as:

A determination of progress in a classroom setting which often results in a grade. During evaluation an instructor uses measurements to categorize or to make a judgment about the quality of work performed, a work product, or a level of learning a skill attained in relation to an established standard. Evaluation is a measurement, comparison, and a judgment of the quality of student work, schools, or an education program. (2004)

Seeing how similar the definitions for assessment and evaluation are, it is easy to see how faculty can confuse the two. Assessment is used to make improvements.

Assessment is done to find out the weaknesses of an academic program or where a student may be having difficulty in learning and to use this information to help either improve the program, curriculum, or student learning. For example if a student is being assessed for his/her ability do to mathematical equations involving fractions; the instructor would have the student complete a variety of problems including adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing fractions. The instructor would then assess the student's answers. After assessing the answers the instructor may find that the student is having difficulty in dividing fractions. The instructor may find that the student is not inverting the denominator and numerator. To assess the student the instructor would not give the student a grade; instead the instructor would simply help the student to see where he/she is making his/her errors. If the instructor were to evaluate the student, the instructor would assign a grade to the student's work.

According to the Higher Learning Commission (2004) in order for assessment to be fully effective it needs to be implemented at three levels—institutional, program, and course. Institutional outcomes should be developed first. These outcomes should be linked to the program outcomes, which likewise should be linked to the course outcomes. Even though the courses are where all outcomes are actually being met, all three levels of assessment need to be measured. (Maki, 2004)

What Is Driving Assessment In Higher Education And Why Do We Have To Do It?

For both four-year and community colleges, no question in academia raises more interest, concern, frustrations, and anxiety, than “How are our students doing?” One reason for such widespread interest is legislators, accrediting bodies, and the general public are all demanding that educational institutions be held accountable and justify themselves in terms of outcomes related to the investments made by federal and state governments, parents, and students. Administrators and faculty, overwhelmed by the

wide array of assessment tools and methods, are concerned about how this emphasis on assessment will affect graduation requirements and accreditation standards. They are also concerned about how it will impact budgeting. (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000)

While there are many advantages to educational institutions that manage enrollments effectively, ongoing documentation of assessing student learning is now an essential survival skill for all educational institutions. Not only do these institutions need to continue to enroll and graduate students, but they also need to prove to all that education provides the essential skills, knowledge, and values of an “educated” person. (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000)

The doubts raised by the lower test scores of college graduates, increases in the amount of remedial or developmental instruction on college campuses, complaints from business and industry about deficiencies in basic communication and computational skills of college graduates, and the highly publicized critical reports compiled by various commissions, have made it easy to see why legislators want to make sure taxpayers’ money is not being misspent. The political appeal of an approach promising to provide quantifiable evidence of gains in student achievement for colleges or universities is self-evident, particularly in times of increased competition of tax dollars. In 1986, the National Governor’s Association recommended that state governments require public colleges and universities to implement systematic, comparable programs to assess student learning. They also recommended that state funding formulas for public colleges and universities be adjusted in such a way that information gained from assessments could be linked to institutional efforts directed at improving student learning. (Vandament, 1987)

In 1986, the Education Commission of the States asked states “not to develop a single assessment instrument to be implemented uniformly at all institutions, or even across institutions with similar missions.” (Vandement, 1987, p.26) Being aware of the

complexities involved in attempting to assess educational outcomes for groups of students, for single institutions, or for multi-campus systems; and also being aware of the competition for funding that such a policy would unleash, the commission's report recommends, "Assessment should not be an end in itself. Rather, it should be an integral part of an institution's strategy to improve teaching and learning and of the state's strategy to monitor the effectiveness of its system of higher education." (Vandament, 1987, p. 26) Regional accreditation agencies, which are organizations made up of member of institutions of higher education, may have become involved in order to keep state legislatures from getting to involved in higher education.

Accreditation agencies decided that they would require institutions to conduct outcomes assessment in order to maintain accreditation. For example, in 1989, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools began requiring that every member institution conduct outcomes assessment. This was one of the few times in its 100-year history that the commission required all institutions to provide evidence that they were "making a good faith effort" to implement such a program. Eventually, specialized accrediting bodies, accrediting agencies that grant professional accreditation for programs rather than the entire institution (e.g., business, veterinary medicine, engineering, counseling, architecture), also began to require outcomes assessment of programs. (Huba & Freed, 2000)

Both the National Governors' Association and the Education Commission of the States view assessment of student learning at key points during the college experience as a "powerful tool for improving higher education." (Vandament, 1987, p. 26) Consequently, both groups recommend assessment programs as a matter of state policy.

In the 1960s and 1970s, community colleges were viewed as a way to provide a college education for all who applied. (Windham, 2001) The enrollment of World War

II veterans created the fastest growth of colleges and universities in the history of higher education. Between 1955 and 1970, the number of students pursuing academic degrees tripled. (Huba & Freed, 2000) Also, during the 1950s and 1960s assessment became important to education because of the perception that “a substantial national investment in education was regarded as an insurance policy in the Cold War and as a way to enhance our technological and scientific position in world trade.” (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000, p. 2)

By the 1970s, the population of students attending college had become more diverse. As the goal of a college education for all became more widespread, colleges were faced with challenges they had never experienced before. Concerns began to emerge that college graduates did not have the skills and abilities needed in the workplace. A movement to reform higher education was brought about by the questioning of its value. (Huba & Freed, 2000)

In the 1980s, the building of community colleges had slowed and had lost some of their support by the general public. (Windham, 2001) Financial, political, and social pressures forced colleges and universities to become more accountable for student learning. The movement toward assessment had begun. Assessment was seen as the answer to meet the need for both documenting accountability and improving the quality of our nation’s educational system. (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000) In 1984 and 1985, four reports were issued addressing the need for reform on the college campuses: *Access to Quality Undergraduate Education* by the Southern Regional Education Board, *Integrity in the College Curriculum* by the Association of American Colleges, *Involvement in Learning* by the National Institute of Education, and *To Reclaim a Legacy*, by W. J. Bennett, all which were subject to substantial debate. These reports received less

attention than *A Nation at Risk*, the report that triggered the reform movement in elementary and secondary schools. (Huba & Freed, 2000)

In some states, politicians assumed the responsibility for initiating reform. A number of states (e.g., Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, and Tennessee) have implemented performance-funding programs. Although many such programs have not been very successful, additional states continue to consider this approach. (Huba & Freed, 2000) One example of this is in the State of Florida. Due to heavy reliance upon community colleges as the entry point for students pursuing bachelor's degrees, Florida wanted to ensure that the quality of community college Associate in Arts graduates was equivalent to the quality of students who began in the State University System. Florida is currently in the process of developing a K-20 educational system and has proposed new accountability measures. These measures would provide information to the public, a new Florida Board of Education, the chancellor of the various sectors, and institutions. The theme of outcomes assessment is central to this restructuring effort. (Windham, 2001)

By the 1990s, the conclusion that the community colleges cost too much for the quality of the graduates they produced encouraged government to expect community colleges to produce more, with better quality and for less money. Accrediting agencies introduced the concept of "institutional effectiveness" and government introduced the concept of funding tied to "performance indicators." (Windham, 2001) These changes led community colleges to recognize the need for a way to examine themselves and determine how to meet the requirements of government and the expectation of the public. To respond to the increasing demands for accountability, all six regional accrediting bodies for higher education began to require assessment plans for all colleges and

universities. (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000) A new emphasis on outcomes assessment had begun.

Mastery learning, criterion-reference testing, behavioral outcomes, and competency-based testing became widely used. The era of articulated goals and outcomes, minimum standard attainment, performance-based education, and the assessment of competence emerged to answer the call for accountability. (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000, p.3)

Why Faculty Involvement Is Needed

Higher education assessment has changed dramatically since the origins of testing for admissions purposes. Many faculty and administrators at colleges and universities are implementing assessment plans to assess the quality of their programs and to determine how much value was added to students' learning and development during students' college experiences. Strong assessment plans provide faculty with meaningful data that can be used to make informed revisions to the curriculum and teaching strategies. The ultimate goal of formal assessment plans at many institutions is to improve student learning and teaching effectiveness. (Jones, 2001) This is one reason why faculty input is vital to the success of an assessment plan and why the assessment process in higher education must be led by the faculty.

Even though it may appear that faculty are doing very little innovative work in assessment, scholarly contributions from assessment leaders clearly indicate that there are innovative assessment models that directly address the principles of good practice for assessing student learning set forth by the American Association of Higher Education. (Jones, 2001, ¶9)

Colleges and universities that have developed successful assessment programs report several advantages for faculty. Faculty at these colleges and universities have a renewed enthusiasm for teaching, a revitalization of interest in students' learning across the disciplines, and a newfound pleasure in working with other faculty. Faculty

development has been the principal payoff for colleges and universities that have confronted this challenge. (Vandament, 1987)

Faculty-Driven Assessment

Assessment is often the sole responsibility of the administration at colleges and universities. While support of assessment at the administrative level is essential, successful assessment programs should be faculty-driven. No matter if it is classroom assessment or program assessment, in order to gain faculty support for assessment it must come from the faculty. Faculty must be the ones who determine what needs to be assessed and how to assess it. Faculty are the ones that must actually administer the assessment tools, analyze the results from these tools, make the necessary changes, and assess again to see if the changes achieved the results that they were intending. Also faculty are the main link to the students and getting the students to participate in assessment. Consequently, faculty must embrace assessment so it can provide information that can improve teaching and student learning, which is the required end result of assessment. This will require faculty to shift their focus away from thinking about assessment as a remote testing and evaluation exercise. They must recognize that they have the power and responsibility to assess, adapt, and to make the necessary changes in the classroom, curriculum, and program levels to maximize student learning. (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000)

Faculty of non-research institutions, community colleges, or career colleges often do not have the research and public service requirement of university faculty. Instead the faculty at these institutions are “teaching” faculty with experience in their professions outside of teaching. The results of the research indicates that even though these faculty do not have the research background and feel that they do not need to involve themselves in the assessment process, they are still the main connection to the students and what they

are learning in the classroom. They must be engaged in any processes to improve student learning and teaching effectiveness. Information on how students learn must be shared with all faculty as part of their professional development at all colleges and universities. According to Windham (2001) faculty must provide input into the types of data that need to be collected. Only when faculty are fully engaged in designing the process, understanding how students learn, and asking for needed data, are improvements realized.

According to Huba and Freed (2000) faculty must assume primary ownership for assessing academic programs. Holding faculty responsible for developing the learning outcomes of the programs, developing the curricula, and for delivering the curricula through their teaching can provide ownership. It follows that faculty should also be responsible for building quality into their programs through assessing the learning that takes place within their programs. In the past faculty have been responsible for developing learning outcomes for courses, developing the curricula, and delivering the curricula as a result faculty do feel a sense of ownership for the curricula. Although faculty have not been responsible for building quality into their programs through assessing the learning that is taken place within their programs. If assessment is being done, it is usually through outside sources. This may be one of the reasons for so much reluctance from faculty for assessment. If the assessment were developed by the faculty as is curricula, this may help the faculty to feel a sense of ownership towards the assessment as they do towards curricula.

Assuming the responsibility for assessment may provide faculty with several opportunities. One is the opportunity to ask important questions about the value and effectiveness of their programs. Another is the opportunity to engage in conversations about student learning with each other. And still another is the opportunity to use data

about student learning to strengthen the way decisions are made, leading to improvement in curricula and instruction. (Huba & Freed, 2000)

It is becoming increasingly clear to higher education administrators that the best way for institutions to be accountable and to involve faculty in the assessment process is to incorporate the assessment of student learning into their culture. Also by faculty taking charge of their programs, making visible their purpose and intent, and by putting in place a data-base system of assessment that focuses on improving student learning, Huba and Freed (2000) argue that the institution itself is the primary beneficiary while also satisfying legislators, parents, students, and accrediting bodies.

Faculty Reluctance

There are several reasons why faculty are reluctant to engage in assessment. Some of these reasons are discussed below.

Nothing Wrong in Higher Education

According to Berliner and Biddle (1995) many faculty are reluctant to be involved with outcomes assessment because they feel that there is currently nothing wrong in higher education. They believe they should not try to fix something that isn't broken. They feel that all the media hype over the issues in higher education is right wing politicians attempt at being "politically correct." Also the press has a tendency to report more on educational failures as opposed to reporting on educational successes. Many feel that the assumption of a recent decline in educational achievement of the average student is a result of politicians and press coverage rather than actual decreased performance.

The issues raised above apply to k-12 education, but there is a carryover to college and to faculty attitudes. Faculty in higher education also feel that there is no problem in higher education and if it is not broken, it does not need to be fixed. An

example is the decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score has nothing to do with average student achievement. Instead it has to do more with students who traditionally would not attend college deciding to take the SAT. These are students, who in the past, ranked lower in schools and did not take the SAT. (Berliner & Biddle, 1994) Likewise it has been stated that graduates from today's colleges and universities know less than previous graduates. Students graduating today may know even more than previous graduates. The four sources used to investigate this claim were: the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT), the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), and the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). The results of this study show that GRE scores are now roughly the same as they were in the 1990s. This is true even though the number of students taking this test has doubled. In 1992 about five times more students took the GMAT than took it in 1966. The average score in 1966 was 485 and in 1992 it was 494. The scores for the LSAT and the MCAT have also risen. Although with new scoring procedures being implemented these scores are more difficult to compare. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995)

Dale Whittington recently examined students' knowledge of history and social studies. Whittington concluded the following: "The perception of decline in the 'results' of American education is open to question. Indeed, given the reduced drop-out rate and less elitist composition of the 17-year-old student body today, one could argue that students today know more American history than did their age peers of the past." (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 34)

Many faculty also feel the hype that American students have fallen behind students in other countries is a result of the same political propaganda and press. In one study John Cogan, Judith Torney-Purta, and Douglas Anderson found that American students knew less about global issues when they began college than Japanese students.

But by the time they graduated the American students surpassed the Japanese students in global knowledge. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995)

Studies also show that Americans are more likely to complete college than people in other Western countries. More than half of all American states graduate 27 percent or more of their twenty-two-year-olds. The highest graduation percentage for a foreign country is 26 percent. It is obvious to some faculty that American education institutions are doing much better than what has been recently publicized. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995)

External Sources

Many faculty have been reluctant to engage in assessment because, in some states or regions of the country, assessment has been introduced as a requirement by external agencies such as legislatures or regional or specialized accreditation associations. (Huba & Freed, 2000) The reasons that the accountability issues were brought in by these external agencies were previously discussed in this study. Faculty are afraid that their competence as a faculty member is being judged by the assessment. Faculty feel that they are being evaluated by these external sources and will be disciplined by their institution's administration if the assessment, which as stated earlier is sometimes confused with evaluation, shows poor results. They fear they will either be reprimanded, their tenure could be at stake, or even fired.

Assessment or accountability tend to generate anxiety, anger, and alienation in faculty. They may feel anxious when the assessment systems are imposed by higher authorities and used as evaluative tools to make important decisions about their lives. They may feel angry if these systems are used unfairly. They also may feel alienated if they do not have any ability to change the system. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995)

Control

Higher education uses many terms for the quality improvement processes including assessment, institutional effectiveness, continuous improvement, and Total Quality Management (TQM). On many campuses, the term, Total Quality Management is seen as a business term and not something that is applicable to higher education. Many faculty on these campuses see TQM as a management tool designed to take power away from faculty and place it in the hands of the administration. (Windham, 2001) This could be another of the reasons why faculty have such a reluctance toward assessment.

Academic freedom is very important to faculty. To be able to go into the classroom and teach the way that they feel is needed is a faculty member's way of feeling empowered in the classroom. In the process of doing assessment, faculty sometimes feel they are giving up this power by doing what the administration deems needs to be done in the classroom in order to assess the students. If the tool used to assess the students is a test, the faculty first feel they are giving up their right to assess the students the way they want and also they feel a need to teach to the test in order for the students to gain the useful information to be successful.

Usefulness

In order for outcomes assessment to be useful for faculty and students, clear, measurable, and defensible standards or outcomes must be set. There must be clear reasons why the standards or outcomes that were set, were chosen. For example in order for someone to get a job as an administrative assistant he/she must possess efficient word processing skills. A defensible outcome for an administrative assistant program would be that the student would be able to word process at an acceptable level. This would be defensible since this is a needed skill for someone to succeed in this profession. (Powers, Fowles, & Willard, 1994) Many times outcomes are not clear, measurable or defensible.

As Brown (2000) noted, faculty and students identify different goals or outcomes from the education process. Faculty identify “higher-order thinking” and “discipline-specific knowledge” as the most important goal or outcome and students identify “career preparation” as the most important goal or outcome. For example faculty feel that general education courses are very important to the education process. While students feel that the general education courses are a waste of their time and just want to get on to their major courses. As a result students often do not take their general education courses as seriously as they do their major courses and do not do as well in their general education courses. This results in a conflict between what faculty feel is important for the students to learn and what students feel is important to learn, which leads to both trying to obtain different outcomes.

Faculty often do assessment just for the sake of doing assessment or because they were told to do so. Consequently, the assessment results or scores often are not useful for the proposed purposes. In the case of scoring writing assessments, holistic scoring of student writing provides little useful information for faculty. This type of scoring produces only ratings of performance according to the criteria set out in the scoring guide. It does not break down the writing to state the student’s strengths and weaknesses. Faculty would like assessment results that will produce more detailed information on student learning in their classes. Faculty need to know if a particular paper’s low score is a result from faulty sentence structure, lack of evidence to support main points, misuse of sources, or some other flaw. The faculty need to know more than just that 80 percent of the students rated above average on the writing assignment. Does a high score indicate creativity, competence in writing mechanics, or prior knowledge of the subject? Administrators find the score valuable and cost-effective as measures of

educational outcomes, but faculty and students need more information to improve student learning. (White, 2000)

Many times faculty believe that some educational outcomes such as behavioral and attitudinal outcomes cannot be measured. As Biggs (2000) states, "Measurement in education is a systematic investigation of student learning and development." (p.6) Measurement is only one tool that can be used for assessment. Quantitative assessment such as measurement cannot help faculty make decisions on such issues as what is a good assessment task and what makes for good performance. These are qualitative decisions, requiring theory of learning as it applies to what is being taught. However, many educators have handed the responsibility of assessment over to "measurement theorists" whose focus is on individual differences in psychology, not education. (Biggs, 2000)

Many faculty think of multiple-choice tests when they think of assessment. Also Many faculty do not find multiple-choice tests very useful. Some faculty feel while multiple-choice tests can be valid indicators or predictors of academic performance, due to the fact that norms and standards are not the same, test items are not real life problems, and students are not given the chance to rationalize their answers, too often these types of tests mislead students and faculty about the kinds of work that has been mastered. (Higgins, 1990) Students are not given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery on multiple-choice tests. Students could possibly pass many multiple-choice tests by memorizing the facts and repeating them back as answers. Many of these tests do not require students to actually critically think through real-life problems. Berliner & Biddle (1995) noted from Suarez and Gottovi that most assessment programs use tests that assess only lower-level thinking skills for specific subjects. These tests do not represent curricular standards, broader offerings, or the performance of the educational institution.

Multiple-choice tests assess students recall of facts, definitions, and other bits of knowledge. These types of tests encourage faculty to use the “drill and practice” style of teaching, which now is known as not one of the most effective teaching styles to increase student learning. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995) Some faculty do not find this type of assessment useful. They feel it is not actually teaching student learning or knowledge, which is what faculty want to know about their students.

Many faculty do not find assessment useful in their teaching for several different reasons. The current assessment that they are doing may not be assessing what they would like to assess. To try to remedy this problem, the following questions should be used: Why are we assessing? For whom are we assessing? What are we actually measuring? What should we be really trying to measure? Who can best measure this and how? Instead of asking these questions, many assessment efforts end up measuring that which is relatively easy to measure instead of measuring what is important and may be harder to measure. Since assessment drives learning, students may to often focus their energy towards learning what is easy, rather than that which is important. (Race, 1999)

Validity

Validity is defined as the interpretations and uses of the assessment. In other words, does the assessment align with the teaching content and with the performance domain? One way to tell if an assessment tool is valid would be if scores are higher after teaching than before. If the scores are not higher, the faculty could find that the tool is not valid; and they may choose to no longer use it.

Because faculty have found that some assessment tools are not valid, they have become suspicious of the usefulness of the assessment. One example of faculty suspicion is as Biggs (2002) quoted from Raul Ramsden regarding developing assessment. “Be suspicious of the objectivity and accuracy of all measures of student ability and be

conscious that human judgment is the most important element.” (p. 15). Limited content coverage, poor generalization, difficulty in a maintaining test security, and increased opportunity for bias due to subjective scoring are all threats to the validity of assessment tools. (Powers, Fowles, & Willard, 1994)

Another case when validity of assessment tools is questioned is when multiple-choice tests are used. Often when multiple-choice tests are used as assessment tools to measure student outcomes, faculty tend to drill their students in taking this kind of test or teach towards the test instead of developing students’ critical thinking and problem-solving skills. (White, 2000) If faculty do not believe assessment is valid, they will in effect make sure it is not by not using the results appropriately or at all.

Some faculty also feel that some assessment tools such as multiple-choice tests are not authentic. They may feel that multiple-choice tests do not possess the following traits: require students to be effective performers; present the student with the full array of tasks of best instructional activities; attend to whether the student can present polished, thorough and justifiable answers, performances, or products. Assessment tools achieve validity and reliability by emphasizing and standardizing the appropriate criteria or simulating real-world “tests” or learning. Instead many faculty feel that these tests consists of the following traits: reveal only whether the student can recognized, recall, or “plug in” what was learned; limited to paper-and-pencil, one-answer questions; ask the student to select or write correct responses without asking why; rarely an opportunity to plan, revise, and verify responses, even when they are open-ended questions; standardizes objective items meaning “there is only one right answer for each question.” (Higgins, 1990, p.2) Consequently multiple-choice tests when forced on faculty meet with reluctance for the various reasons mentioned above.

Training

Lack of faculty training seems to be a reoccurring issue regarding assessment. Could this lack of training be a reason faculty are so reluctant to take the leadership role in assessment? If so, can workshops on assessment help? According to Holroyd (1999) to begin one must ask, “What is the main purpose of these workshops?” (¶2) The intent of professional development in assessment may have turned off faculty. Holroyd (1999) suggest that there were three types of workshops. The first de-stabilizes thinking on the subject. Facilitators show faculty the unreliability of essay scoring, and how trivial “objective” tests are. Facilitators then send the faculty on their way to figure it all out for themselves. A second type was to provide simple guidance on good practice and not expect the faculty to wade through theory and research. A third type was to deal in principles and big ideas, and not patronize faculty with simplistic hints and tips. If these are the types of training they are receiving, it is no wonder faculty leave the workshops more confused than when the training began. This may be why faculty are also reluctant to attend workshops on assessment. One way to help the faculty is to ask them to identify those aspects of assessment they think are difficult, and then to structure the training around the topics that are raised.

Faculty Reluctance at Baker College

Was the reluctance to administer outcomes assessment from the faculty at Baker College a result from some of the same reasons mentioned in the literature? Do the faculty really understand what assessment is and why they are to conduct assessment at the class, course, and program levels? Also do they understand why their involvement in the process from beginning to end is so important and why they need to be the actual drivers of the assessment process for their programs? Did Baker College faculty feel that they were doing the assessment because it was mandated by the administration at the

college or the Higher Learning Commission, and it really was of no benefit to themselves? Did they feel that in doing assessment they would be giving up control or academic freedom in their class rooms? Did the faculty feel that the information that they were asked to gather was not useful or valid? Or did they feel that knowledge or student learning is not measurable? Did all of these concerns arise from the faculty not being knowledgeable in assessment? Was more training desired and needed? These questions served as the starting point for the following research conducted at Baker College.

Methodology

Design

A large number of the faculty at Baker College are very resistant to administering outcomes assessment. This is verified by the lack of assessment data available from the faculty. What is causing the resistance? Was it because they really are not educated regarding what the College actually expected for outcomes assessment? Was it because they attempted or are attempting to do outcomes assessment and are encountering many difficulties, and consequently decided not to do it? Were there other issues regarding their reluctance? Did the faculty at Baker College have some of the issues as the faculty in the literature?

Based on the literature, a survey was developed to answer the following research questions:

1. How much knowledge do faculty have on student outcomes assessment?
2. What are some of the difficulties faculty are finding in their attempts to carry out assessment policies and procedures?
3. What are the causes of faculty resistance to assessment?

A copy of the survey appears in Figure I.

With so many assessment tools and methods currently available, faculty and administrators may feel overwhelmed. They are concerned how assessment will affect graduation requirements, accreditation standards, and budgeting. (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000) Faculty must recognize that they have the power and responsibility to assess, adapt, and innovate the classroom, curricula, and program to maximize student learning. (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000) Many faculty have been reluctant to engage in assessment because, in some states or regions of the country, assessment has been introduced as a requirement by external agencies such as legislatures or regional or specialized accreditation associations. (Huba & Freed, 2000)

This survey tool was designed to answer the previously mentioned research questions while trying to find solutions to the problems mentioned in the literature. The first question, question #1a, on the survey asked whether faculty collected data using an outcomes assessment instrument. The purpose of this question was to find out what percentage of the faculty actually collected data even if they were not aware of the intent. This question gives information on the use of assessment at Baker College.

Questions #1b and #1c probed deeper into faculty use of assessment for those who responded positively to question #1a. Once data had been collected, did faculty interpret and use the data? Hopefully, if the faculty interpreted and used the data perhaps they would realize that assessment provides them with meaningful data that can be used as a foundation upon which to make informed revisions to the curricula and related changes. (Jones, 2001) It was discovered that colleges and universities that have developed successful assessment programs report the following positive gains for faculty: a renewed enthusiasm for teaching, a revitalization of student learning, and a renewed excitement in working with colleagues from their own and other departments and schools. (Vandament, 1987) As a result if faculty were actually utilizing the assessment

process, there would be less resistance due to the advantages they would gain. Faculty may realize assessment results would aid them in gaining power and responsibility to make changes in the classroom, the curricula, and the program to maximize student learning. (Hatfield & Gorman, 2000)

Questions #2, #3, and #4 dealt with assessment specifically at Baker College. Even if faculty were familiar with assessment, question #2 inquired how familiar they were with the assessment plan for Baker College. Question #3 asked if faculty were aware of the new mission pertaining to assessment that has been added to the Baker College Mission and Purposes. This question was added to find out if the faculty realized how important assessment has become to Baker College overall. Question #4 asked if faculty were familiar with the assessment data available on the Baker College web site.

Questions #5 and #6 both have to do with the training faculty have received on the assessment process at Baker College. As Holroyd (1999) noted many times when faculty receive training in assessment, they leave the training more confused than they were before the training.

Questions #7, #8, and #9 dealt with ways in which the current assessment process and plan at Baker could be improved to help the faculty with actually using the assessment tools that are available. The research shows there are many reasons faculty do not partake in the assessment process at many different institutions of learning. The answers from faculty should provide insight specific to assessment at Baker College.

Originally, the questions for the survey were developed by asking “what do the faculty know about assessment and what are their views on assessment.” Many revisions were made to the original questions. The resulting questions are listed in both Figure I and Table 1.

Procedure

In spring of 2003, the Human Subjects Committee at the University of Michigan-Flint and the Baker College System President approved a survey of Baker College faculty involvement in student outcomes assessment throughout the Baker College System. The Human Subject Committee at the University of Michigan-Flint recommended one change, to add to the letter of purpose the statement that the faculty involvement is completely voluntary. Then the surveys were sent out to randomly selected Baker College faculty with the letter of purpose and a postage-paid return envelope. Baker College is an 11-campus system with 1,060 full- and part-time (adjunct) faculty. The participants for the survey were selected from 11 different rosters that were run by campus from the Baker College database. From these rosters 95% of faculty are adjunct faculty, every fifth faculty member was sent the survey. A total of 200 surveys were sent to faculty. In order for faculty to feel more comfortable answering as honestly as possible and with out worry about any repercussion from the administration, this was an anonymous survey. Not knowing which faculty returned the survey, one follow-up email was sent to all faculty throughout the Baker College System. After the follow-up email, 78 of 80 surveys that were returned had usable data. After double checking the data for accuracy, it was entered into an Excel spreadsheet and then summarized using basic functions.

The data from the survey was adjusted because three participants that checked “no” for question #1a about the use of data then answered inconsistently about the interpretation and decisions made on questions #1b and #1c. See Figure I. Because these faculty did not collect data, there was no way for them to interpret or use the data. The “yes” responses to questions #1b and #1c were recoded to “not applicable” for those participants that answered “no” to question #1a.

Results

As indicated on Figure I and Table I question #1a, the survey data shows that less than half of the faculty surveyed (44%) collected assessment data as part of their teaching. This is evidence that faculty are either lacking knowledge regarding assessment or are just resistant to applying it. Of the faculty that collected data, 80% actually took the time to analyze the data and 100% of the faculty that analyzed the data made decisions based on the results of the data. This is indicated on Figure I and Table I questions #1b and #1c. This shows that when faculty are actually knowledgeable of the assessment process they tend to utilize it more.

Almost half of the faculty (45.6%) surveyed are unfamiliar with the college's assessment plan, as indicated by question #2. This is the same amount of faculty that did not collect assessment data. Further evidence of faculty lack of knowledge regarding assessment may be a reason for faculty reluctance. Only 17.7% of the faculty that responded were aware of the plan and how it applied to their work. A majority of the faculty (72.7%) are not even familiar with the new purpose regarding assessment that was added to the college's mission and purposes. Out of the 77 responses only 21 faculty members were aware of the new purpose and only 11 of those 21 faculty have actually read the new purpose, which is indicated by question #3. Over half of the faculty (69.6%) are not familiar with the assessment data available to them on the Baker College web site. Out of 79 responses only 24 faculty members have even looked at the data and only seven of the 24 have used the data to make decision in the classroom indicated by question #4. The responses to questions #2, #3, and #4 are additional evidence of faculty's lack of the Baker College assessment process and plan.

Most of the faculty have received either no training or very limited training (two sessions or less) on assessment indicated by question #5. Though most faculty have very

little previous training in assessment, a majority of them (85.7%) are interest in additional assessment training indicated by question #6.

Overall the results of this survey indicate that faculty resistance towards assessment may be due to faculty's ignorance of the assessment process. This may be particular to this institution due to the fact that Baker College has a very high percentage (95%) of adjunct faculty. The adjunct faculty have a difficult time connecting their individual class or classes into the entire process. Even though both full-time and adjunct faculty were surveyed, adjunct faculty do not see their class as part of the big picture. Evidence of this is in some of the faculty's comments regarding the assessment. One faculty felt that assessment was only the full-time faculty's responsibility. Still another faculty member did not feel that collecting assessment data was required as part of his/her job responsibilities. Also several felt that because it was only their first or second time teaching that they did not need to use assessment and several other faculty members felt that they had no reason to collect assessment data and or it was not relevant to the course they teach or what they do. (Refer to Figure I, question #8)

Other evidence of faculty lack of education on assessment was due to the fact of their lack of training in assessment is the large number of faculty interested in more training. The most common response to the last question on the survey, "How could the assessment process at Baker College be made more beneficial to you?" was requesting more knowledge of the Baker College process and more knowledge of the results of the assessment taking place. (Refer to Figure I, question #9) Some faculty, especially the adjunct faculty, felt that it was not their responsibility to do assessment. They do not realize that in order to be effective in their class they must assess student understanding. Even blank stares tell them something about student learning.

Case Analysis

The original assessment plan developed in 1990, consisted of various surveys that the college had been using for the past several years. These surveys are as follows: Course Reviews by Students, Course Reviews by Faculty, Program Reviews by Students, Program Reviews by Faculty, 90-Day Graduate Surveys, 90-Day Employers Surveys, ACT Alumni Surveys, and Work Experience Evaluation by Supervisors. The original assessment plan submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in 1990 stated that faculty and administrators from the different programs offered by Baker College would use these surveys along with the Graduate Employment Report and at least one direct measure to assess student outcomes for each program. The original plan was to have all of the assessment as standardized as possible. In the fall of 2000 about 50 percent of the programs offered at Baker actually had program outcomes developed. Most of these were of poor quality. Many of these outcomes were not measurable, and the outcomes that could be measured were not yielding useful information for faculty. Also, many faculty did not even know program outcomes existed and what program outcomes are. All of the programs needed to develop direct measures to use for measuring actual student learning.

After struggling for years in trying to apply the original plan throughout the Baker College System, the College's System Academic Assessment Committee decided that this plan was not working. It was decided to survey the faculty of the college to try to find out why it was not working. The results of the survey indicated that the faculty lacked knowledge of the assessment plan and of assessment in general.

As a result of this survey, changes are being made. The first step is to begin educating the deans and other academic administrators on all the campuses on assessment, so they can educate their faculty. A training-the-trainer professional

development for deans, associate deans, and department chairs will be developed. Also, a professional development training module for faculty has been developed. This may possibly be a mandatory module that all Baker College faculty must complete in order to continue teaching at the College. More in-dept modules on assessment are also being planned for the future.

Besides the faculty needing education on assessment, it has also been discovered that the “one size fits all” assessment plan originally developed is not working. All programs can not be assessed the same and use the same assessment tools. As a result of trying to use the “one size fits all” assessment plan, System Program Coordinators have gathered a lot of useless data that they were not able to draw any substantial conclusions from. The Triennial Assessment Reports that were compiled by the System Program Coordinators consists of a lot of data that did not help with making any improvements to programs. As a result of these findings, Baker faculty and administrators are currently working developing their individual program assessment plans. The faculty from each department will determine what they want to assess, how they will assess, and what they will do with this information once they get it. The assessment will come from the bottom up. This will help with not only educating the faculty on assessment, but also help gain faculty acceptance. No longer will it be a “one size fits all” assessment. Valid and reliable data cannot be gathered from all programs with this approach. The future goal is data that will be collected will be valid and more reliable because it will be geared toward the individual program.

By the assessment process originally being driven from the administration down to the faculty, it did get faculty actually trying to do the assessment and look at what data was available to try to draw some conclusions from. The original process has also developed faculty and administration’s appetite for good assessment and good assessment

data. Once either a faculty member or an administrator starts looking at what data is available he/she seems to want to look into more data to try to find out how successful Baker College really is at preparing students for the work place.

Currently Baker College is restructuring their entire assessment process. As mentioned earlier, Baker will be moving away from the “one size fits all” model to having the faculty develop an assessment plan for their programs. Also instead of one massive report due from each System Program Coordinator every three years, they will submit a smaller report every year. Instead of the report being a compilation of data that is not really telling the faculty what they want to know, it will be a report on what was done over the past year on their individualized assessment plans.

Since these findings, there has been much discussion on how to try to fix the assessment process at Baker College. There is much support from the upper administration for the changes needed for the assessment process at Baker. One example of the support is getting all the campuses to put an assessment line item in their annual budgets, so that faculty can be paid for their extra work on assessment. Another example of support is by incorporating that any new program offerings must have program outcomes developed before being approved at the highest level of administration.

After the new assessment plan is in place, further research will be done to determine how many faculty actually make changes to their programs, curricula, and teaching strategies based on the assessment data gathered. Faculty will be surveyed once again to see if more of them are actually involved and more knowledgeable of the assessment process. Another item would be when the faculty actually develop their own assessment plan, if they are more inclined to research student learning and answer the question “where and when do students begin learning?”

Conclusion

The research shows that the faculty at Baker College had many of the same concerns as the faculty in the literature. The faculty at Baker College lack a great deal of knowledge regarding the College's assessment process and plan. Some faculty do not even realize that they are doing classroom assessment every time they teach. As in the literature, the faculty feel that they are receiving mixed messages regarding assessment. Even though the research shows that the faculty do lack knowledge of the assessment process at Baker College, they are interested in learning more about it.

As a result of the faculty's lack of knowledge regarding assessment, many feel that assessment is a waste of their time, and it becomes a last agenda item on their list of priorities. They feel that there is nothing wrong with the current way things are being done and assessment is just another "add on" to their daily "to do list."

They do not see how assessment is a part of their teaching strategies and they are continuously assessing student learning if they realize it or not. Every time they check for a student's knowledge on a subject, they are assessing.

The faculty at Baker that are knowledgeable of the College's assessment process, find it to be too time consuming and tedious. They also do not find value in the current process. Many times the results or data on a program level from the current process never get back to the faculty. So they do not find the usefulness in conducting program outcomes assessment. Also, the process up until now was not yielding useful data. As a consequence, the faculty did not see any changes being made to programs as a result of the program outcomes assessment because very few changes were being made if any at all to programs.

To help meet the needs of the Baker College faculty for more education on assessment, training modules will be developed and available for all faculty and administrator will be trained regarding assessment so they can help with training the faculty.

Faculty Involvement in Student Outcomes Assessment at Baker College

5. How much formal training in assessment have you had?		46	16	15
6. How interested are you in formal training in assessment?		11	49	17
7. How do you know when your students have mastered an objective that you are teaching?	Tests, assignments, classroom feedback.			
8. What are some of the difficulties you have encountered while implementing student outcomes assessment in your classroom?	No difficulties, unclear objectives or outcomes, lack of time			
9. How could the assessment process at Baker College be made more beneficial to you?	Don't know, more training, better communication, action taken from results.			

Figure I

Faculty Involvement in Student Outcomes Assessment at Baker College

Choose the best answer for each of the following questions. Please make any appropriate and necessary comments.

1. **Assessment is a process that has three parts: gathering data, interpreting data, and making decisions based on data.**
 - a. Have you collected assessment data at Baker College from capstone projects; portfolio projects; performance on licensure, certification, professional exams, locally-developed standardized exams, or sections of standardized exams?
Choose One: 35 Yes 44 No
 If no, why not?
 - b. Have you interpreted the assessment data that you collected at Baker College?
Choose One: 28 Yes 7 No
 If no, why not?
 - c. Have you made decisions based on the data that you interpreted at Baker College?
Choose One: 28 Yes 0 No
 If no, why not?
2. **How familiar are you with the Assessment Plan for Baker College?** (*Choose One*)
 - 36 Totally Unfamiliar (I have never heard of the plan.)
 - 29 Somewhat Familiar (I have heard of the plan, but I don't know how it applies to my work.)
 - 14 Familiar (I am aware of the plan, and I know how it applies to my work.)
3. **How aware are you of the new purpose pertaining to assessment that was added to the Baker College Mission and Purposes?** (*Choose One*)
 - 56 Not Aware (I have not heard about the new purpose.)
 - 10 Aware (I have heard of the new purpose, but I have not read it.)
 - 11 Very Aware (I have heard about the new purpose, and I have read it.)
4. **How familiar are you with the assessment data on the Baker College Web site?** (*Choose One*)
 - 55 Totally Unfamiliar (I have never looked at the data.)
 - 17 Somewhat Familiar (I have looked at the data.)
 - 7 Familiar (I have looked at the data, and I have used it to make decisions in the classroom.)
5. **How much formal training in assessment have you had?** (*Choose One*)
 - 46 I have had no formal training in assessment.
 - 16 I have had 1 to 2 formal training sessions in assessment.
 - 15 I have had 3 or more formal training sessions in assessment.

Faculty Involvement in Student Outcomes Assessment at Baker College

6. How interested are you in formal training in assessment? (Choose One)

- 11 I have no interest in formal training in assessment.
- 49 I have some interest in formal training in assessment.
- 17 I am very interested in formal training in assessment.

7. How do you know when your students have mastered an objective that you are teaching?

Able to perform well on test

They demonstrate it to me one on one in the lab

Written test and observation

Synthesis of information. Upper order Bloom's Taxonomy is being demonstrated. They can, recall, explain and provide examples...care competencies

Test Feedback, In class projects and discussions, Case studies, Homework, Internet assignments

Tests, presentations, class discussions, written projects

It depends on the objectives, Basic skills=objective tests, Abstract and conceptual=essay and oral responses, Personality and characteristics=in class and w/in group

By their class responses, quiz and test results, writings

They do well on tests. They write better papers.

Weekly quiz

Testing, competency evaluation of skills

The student's knowledge is reflected in test scores, term papers, group activities, speeches, and class discussions.

When they perform the tasks completely and accurately

When he/she can really problem solve or apply the information taught

When they can return a demonstrate task or give rationale that is appropriate.

The student is required to successfully complete a performance assessment that demonstrates mastery of the subject objective. Assessment is somewhat easy with technical subjects. They can either fix the component that is the objective, or not.

From tests and from verbal feedback

Student performs with out my assistance and shows mastery. Student feedback indicates pleasure at mastering new skill(s)

The students have mastered the objectives I am teaching by homework assignments, standardized assessment ant the final exam; passing the final with a passing grade as well as students' feedback.

Tests/Homework

Demonstrate via exam, show me, explain by example

Through demonstration/explanation

Students can verbally explain to me terms, problems, etc. and teach this to other students. Academic performance on test/homework

Their performance on tests. Their responses to inquires and questions.

Through project work, exams, quizzes, class participations

Tests, demonstrate a hands-on concept for me. System assessment result added to final exams

Testing or performance—either work, project or participation

Competency is done on skill—student demonstrates, tests, papers

Through exams and discussions in class.

I see application of the objective beyond standardized tests. Also, the feedback I receive from the students accomplishing w/success the objective.

Hopefully, they survive the first semester and stay in school, use of library and LSS, Feedback from instructors

Review curriculum objectives, testing, research analysis, lecture/discussion

Demonstrate in written or verbal form

Verbal feedback during lecture, performance on tests, on-on-one tutoring

Evaluate their performance—either in class (speeches) or on test

Students display mastery in their conversations, questioning techniques, written assessment, and projects. I use them to determine their grade and how much we need to reinforce.

The tests are designed to test outcomes and the grade % reflects the % outcomes achieved.

Test scores

Quiz, Handouts

Quizzes and tests reflect knowledge

I use a scoring rubric for performance assessment; for written test I try to weigh points more for essential information.

Grades and performance are obvious

When they can apply it on their own in projects, homework, tests

When students are able to verbalize the information, demonstrate use of the information in exercises, test questions reflect knowledge of the natural

When they have completed an assignment that corresponds to the objective(s).

Can execute the skill.

When they can perform it in a lab, When they can answer objective questions.

By evaluating their papers and final exams

They are required to demonstrate their ability to apply the concept in case studies, essay examinations, or share relevant workplace experience that shows they've applied the concept, or understand it. They are not permitted to merely write a textbook concept as their response. The concept must be accompanied by some critical thinking and application discussion.

When they do well on their examinations and can demonstrate the ability in a laboratory setting.

From their homework assignments and class participation, I attempt to make this assessment.

They are assessed weekly on ten learning goals and have a final all-inclusive exam.

By grading their homework, exam, quiz, and project report, and class participation assignments which test their mastery of those objectives.

When they are comfortable with the subject and I get good solid discussion with them. Not just something they have read in a book.

I can tell by the assignments that they submit and the questions that they ask.

As an English instructor, I know when the students have mastered an objective when they can do all of the following in an assignment: 1. Produce a paper that is mechanically correct (this is at the basis of all English classes). 2. Produce a paper that is effectively organized along the lines of the general model I have given them for the objective assignment. 3. Demonstrated that they are able not only to replicate the general model but also use it in ways that are innovative and flexible.

In my opinion, the best way to assess students is to give students a list of the criteria you are assessing them on right from the start—why leave anyone guessing? I have a list of criteria the student is expected to meet for each assignment based on the course outcomes set by Baker. For their grade sheet each week, I copy the list to an email and break the criteria down into point values. From there, I can elaborate on each item explaining why a student lost points and how he/she can improve. The students really appreciate the detailed feedback rarely question a grade because it is all spelled out clearly each week. I know the student has mastered the objectives when all of the criteria items are correct on that assignment. Because the duration of an online course is so short, students usually have one chance to get the assignment right. By spelling out the requirements and grading based directly on those requirements, there is no confusion and students are able to meet the requirements with a higher success rate.

I structure the assessments in the class to reflect the objectives of the course.

In programming it is very easy. Students write programs that test at every level whether or not they have mastered the material.

Students may be assessed in a variety of ways including testing, in-class exercises pertaining to a specific topic, class discussion, projects, and writing assignments.

***Through my grading of their completed work. I have designed the assignments in such a manner that through my grading the work, I can assess whether or not they are comprehending the objectives of the course. Of course this isn't perfect, but the way the assignments are designed I can tell a student's level of understanding. I teach an Accounting based course and I personally grade each assignment and make individual feedback on each assignment. I don't use any of the BB standardized functions because I feel individualized feedback works best in my class. If I used MC or short answer type problems for assessing their work, I would not have a good understanding of their progress. I want to see a student's work and thought process and I don't feel BB assessment functions adequately capture that in my type of class.

I know because of the answers I get in the weekly assignments as well as the midterm and final exams. Written assignments (papers) and essay exams.

At other colleges where I teach, I do a pre and post test. Since multiple choice tests were not permitted at Baker until recently, this will be the first term (May-June) that I am trying my pre and post test process. I have found it very useful at the other colleges. It helps me determine if the message and the learning is coming across or not.

Based on responses to the assignments and the discussions in the forums.

By the nature of the kinds of answers they provide on DQs and essays.

It is difficult to know; I can only at this time, determine their success based upon the weekly grades and final course grade they receive.

From the light that goes on in their eyes through various homework and classroom assignments and from testing results.

By discussion questions, assignments submitted, and other deliverables that the students submit for their courses.

I observe the discussion board responses daily and make comments either in support or adding additional information.

I measure the student's progress in class by the quality of work turned into me.

Being a keyboarding instructor, I can observe objective mastery through the work that is turned in. Timed writings allow me to check their speed as well as accuracy and the homework is also a useful tool in evaluating them as well.

When they can demonstrate that knowledge in either a hands-on environment or by explaining/verbalizing it.

By listening to what they say. By testing them in writing.

I measure their projects against a rubric which is provided to them at the beginning of the term. They then receive a copy of the completed rubric and the project with comments after the submission. In addition I use formative assessment during the term by asking for feedback on various aspects of the course. I don't find the survey tools provided to the students for the course or on me especially helpful. I wish we could add some questions of our own (which I now do through another survey) about the specifics of the course.

8. What are some of the difficulties you have encountered while implementing student outcomes assessment in your classroom?

Ambiguous wording of questions, Non-applicability

I assess student outcomes using lab sheets and having students demonstrate their competency as part of midterm and final exams.

No real difficulties

This has not been a major issue of measurement for me.

Many of the students are not readers...doers

Unclear course objectives, outdated course objectives

Dealing with GPA requirement for certain programs

Lack of understanding of outcomes terminology

None

Time necessary to measure the outcomes, especially if several are required

N/A

None

The ability to truly evaluate students' outcomes assessments is very time consuming and challenging to perform in the classroom setting

The various educational backgrounds of the students make it challenging to instruct

The difficulty is in ensuring the assessment is difficult enough to challenge the student, but still obtainable by the majority of students.

N/A; I've not had a reason to; I don't even know what capstone project et al are.

N/A

My class is based on spelling as definition therefore students can capture the lingo but be unable to spell. However they s/b able to spell words and know definition since this will be part of their job in the future.

None

Occasional faculty resistance, conflicting invalid data

Not getting students to ask questions when they don't understand

None.

How to make them more applicable to industry instead of just knowing what is in the textbook

We have different ideas on how to develop the system questions; wording, multiple answer, which classes are most relevant to add assessment to.

Absences or not met appointed event, lack of student interest

Students do not understand the process they interpret/translate to how well they like the instructor or how well they do in class. Many program instructors do not understand either.

The lack of care and participation. Moreover, the lack of sense of seriousness of the potential information gained.

After a Basic Math test is taken, it is sent to the Learning Center—Student and I don't always have the opportunity to review their weaknesses

Did they really learn it to be able to use it? Just long enough for test? Did they cheat? Can they apply what they've learned.

Students always prefer project over formal written exams.

Do they (the students) understand what they are tested on or are they reciting information.

Doing the math with weighted scores; designing written tests so scores adds up to 100—figuring the math any other way is difficult (I have a Master's which included training in assessment but the math was always a problem!)

There was a gap between assessment requirements and was told to students to do example ISE499 Spring 2003. Students had hard time finding a project that would satisfy assessment/dept criteria. Not enough money. Ideas (projects)

They are not applicable.

Difficult to know what to assess. We spend a lot of time on program assessment which is totally wasted. The measures we are collecting are not assessing anything. We're only doing assessment because we're being forced to.

It seems a bit disjointed with no common assignments or background to insure everyone is measuring the same things.

The only significant difficulty is having enough time to present the material in a manner that all different learning styles will benefit from. I would have to say that lack of a multimedia room was definitely a problem. I have wonderful CD ROMs and internet based programs that students would benefit from, but with the lack of multimedia space, this has been difficult.

It is very subjective.

None really, I assess their responses on specific aspects of the assignments.

None.

N/A

Unforeseen variables like students turning in late work and incomplete assignments is the most frequent, is boringly predictable difficulties. Such a problem leaves me with incomplete “data.”

When I first started, I didn’t break down the criteria far enough—my grading criteria was less specific, I should say. As I learned what was most important to students, I reworked my grade sheet into very specific areas of assessment. This helps them as I have stated above, but it also helps me offer more detailed feedback. I have a master sheet that I copy to an email and then fill in the blanks accordingly. This improves my response time—my grade sheets are all out by Thursday—one day after the week is finished. The students LOVE that and I like being able to concentrate on the week in front of me instead of the grades behind me!

I really haven’t had any. The process is straightforward: The College posts the course objectives, and I conform my assessment exercises to them.

No specific problems but with assessment related to tests, I notice instructors teaching toward the assessment. It seems as if they feel that the assessment not only assess the student’s performance but their performance as well.

Students tend to give a good evaluation to the professor if the professor makes the class easy and vice versa.

I haven’t tried it yet.

The key element is coming up with the right questions for the pre and post test.

Since I have very limited knowledge of the assessment process, I haven’t.

N/A

Attempting to figure out what was a good assessment technique.

I prefer to use tests as part of my assessment of students. However, the course I taught did not utilize tests.

The only difficulty I have noticed has nothing to do with the actual assessment process but more so with the student/s and getting them to complete their “goals” in the time frame I have given them.

Wording of questions, interpretations of questions. Also, the System perspective of what is important in the real-world. This is sometimes a departmental issue.

Very poor level of students who can barely read or write, and really don’t care. They are in school for the wrong reasons and have not been counseled properly.

9. How could the assessment process at Baker College be made more beneficial to you?

Tailor assessment to class

I don’t understand Baker’s assessment process enough to answer this question

I don’t know

Build the assessment measures into the syllabus guide. That is...connect the assessment measures to the COs and CCs in such a way as it is a default function.

Understand entry level behaviors before course begins (pre-post assessments)

This would be a good topic for in-service training

Assessment for certain classes, such as II sections from I needs attention. Adjunct faculty are not significantly involved.

I don’t know

Handout more literature on assessment

Don’t just report them! No one takes any action on them. They are an exercise with no meaning!

As a department chair, I understand the need for assessments and the role they play if making changes to a program. If I wasn’t so involved, the assessment process may not be as meaningful. I think the college could do a better job of educating the faculty about the importance of assessment...other than it’s something we must do but I don’t know why.

Training, providing clear expectations

Unsure

In the technology area, we need a better baseline of course outcomes. Perhaps we need to raise the bar a bit.

Faculty can be made more aware.

More familiarity with Baker's assessment goals certainly would be beneficial.

Make the assessment test random and be taken in the Student Learning Center via student ID #. Match the assessment with the waiver test available.

Too new!

More time to perform assessment, More support/meetings to discuss implementation procedures.

My classroom assessment is appropriate for my teaching style. I make adjustments according to students' needs.

By offering formal training (perhaps as a faculty in-service during faculty orientation meeting prior to term starting). By publishing the statistics.

Get rid of all the bureaucracy and also need a little more input from nonacademia

Use more subcommittees and share pertinent information directly to those required to incorporate it.

Results shared with instructors involved but only information pertaining to their area or impact made on other areas.

Opportunities to examine and have input on questions. Check for interpretation and expectations.

I'd like to know what Baker College's Assessment process is and based on.

Offer additional class in study

Not sure—haven't thought about it

If I were given information periodically, I could learn from it

I guess more information about it. A mandatory in-service of some kind—paid preferably.

Make people aware of it. *What control do we have to go outside of the prescribed curriculum. The classes I tend to teach are canned and planned (not much lead way to change things at the primary level)

I know no way

Inform instructor of process!

Would like other teachers in the same program to share their written test questions.

Give us more information. Make our teaching load more consistent, Improve communication.

More input.

Show me that it has relevance to teaching. Show me that it is not an utter waste of time.

I am not sure...

Offer some continuing education on the topic

It is a topic that needs to be communicated to part-time faculty. Is it possible to hold annual meetings in Flint, Michigan to update part-time faculty? It could be voluntary. However, I would time this meeting around a time that more part-time faculty may attend a two-three hour meeting.

Let us know what it entails.

No changes recommended at this time.

N/A

Right now I'm most interested in ways to make the assessment process more applicable to the online environment since that is where I work. I'd also love to get more information of this sort about how the online Baker classes match up with traditional "classroom" classes at Baker.

I am not sure.

I guess I need to know more about it.

Increased understanding about the uses of the assessment data.

Look at the individual responses of students rather than the summary responses.

Understanding how it works.

1. By receiving information from Baker as to how the assessment works; how and why it is required.
2. By receiving training in it. 3. Having a dialogue with other personal at Baker Flint about their use and how I can implement it in my courses.

N/A

I think the college does a good job.

Personally, I would benefit more if the assessment process was explained to me (not in depth, but like an outline of what the process entails and what steps are needed to successfully use it.)

If results were shared with not only full-time, but also adjunct faculty. Adjuncts should also have more input on what is being assessed.

Reference List

Baker College, 2004 System Academic Assessment Committee, Assessment Definitions. Retrieved July 2004, from <http://www.baker.edu>.

Barrington, L.W. (2003 November-December). Less assessment more learning. *Academe*. 29-31.

Berliner, D.C. and Biddle, B.J.(1995) *The manufactured crisis: myths, fraud, and the attack on America's public schools*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Biggs, J. (2002, July-August) Assessment: where did we go wrong a reply. *Assessment update*, 14 (4) 6-7, 15.

Brown, G. (2000, November). The venn of assessment transforming instructional design. *Syllabus*, 36-39.

Hatfield, S.R and Gorman, K. L. (2000). Assessment in education—the past, present, and future. In Jim Rucker (Ed.) *Assessment in Business Education* (pp 1-10). Reston, VA: National Business Education Association.

Holroyd, C. (1999). Planning and implementing assessment. *Teaching in Higher Education*. 4 (2) 287-290.

Huba, M.E and Freed, J.E. (2000). Learner-centered assessment on college campuses shifting the focus from teaching to learning. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Jones, E.A. (2001). Assessment in higher education: issues of access, quality, student development, and public policy. *The Journal of Higher Education*. 72 (1) 117-119.

Maki, Peggy. (2004, March). Assessing for learning. Paper presented at the 109th annual meeting of the Higher Learning Commission, Chicago, Il.

Powers, D.E., Fowles, M.E., and Willard, A.E. (1994). Direct assessment, direct validation? An example from the assessment of writing. *Educational Assessment*. 2 (1) 89-100.

Race, P. (1999). Student assessment in higher education: a handbook for assessing performance. *Studies in Higher Education*. 24 (3) 390-392.

Vandament, W.E. (1987). A state university perspective on student outcome assessment. In Diane F. Halpen (Ed.) *New directions for higher education student outcomes assessment what institutions stand to gain*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc. 59. 25-28.

White, E.M. (2000, November 10). Bursting the bubble sheet: how to improve evaluations of teaching. *The chronicle of higher education*, B11.

Windham, P. (2001). Changes needed in community colleges to improve teaching and learning. Quality Congress, Asq's...Annual Quality Congress Proceedings. 756-769.