Examples of Assessment Tools

In this section, we present different definitions and potential examples of different forms of assessment that are available. The choices presented are identical to those in the assessment database and should help you with choosing the appropriate assessment. There is a good deal of similarity between some types (as you will note) in the list, and so this guide might be helpful for narrowing down which type of assessment you wish to use.

Much of the information presented below has been taken from the external consultant (Mary Allen) that came to Delta College to help with our assessment efforts.

Some references (which we (SLAC) shall try to provide):

For tips on effective interviewing see pages 199-200 of Assessing General Education Programs by Mary J. Allen.

For developing an interview script see pages 115-117 of Assessing Academic programs in Higher Education by Mary J. Allen.

Mary Allen – handout on Direct and Indirect Assessment -2008 SACS-COC Summer Institute

Suggestions for best practices for writing effective close-ended and open-ended questions can be found on page 182-185 of Assessing General Education Programs by Mary J. Allen.

Mary J. Allen, "Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education," 2004.

Capstone Exam (s) / Mock Prof Exam

Description:

Assessment is done through an exam developed by the program faculty at the end of the program either as a capstone to measure the extent of what students learned or as practice for a professional certification exam, e.g.

Best Practices:

Before giving or requiring such an exam, be sure to

- check that questions on the exam are related to outcome(s) to be measured.
- check that questions are very clearly written so that there is no ambiguity as to the answer.
- distribute types and number of questions appropriately for the outcome(s) to be measured.
- prepare a rubric so that all instructors agree on it and can use it to score, potentially, multiple sections of artifacts in a consistent way.
- determine whether faculty associated with the courses in the program are willing to act on the results of the exam.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Appropriate mixes of essay and objective questions allow faculty to address various types of learning outcomes
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- If well-constructed, they are likely to have good validity.
- Because local faculty write the exam, they are likely to be interested in results and willing to use them.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- These exams are likely to be less reliable than published exams.
- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Creating and scoring exams takes time.
- Traditional testing methods have been criticized for not being "authentic."
- Norms generally are not available.

Capstone Performance(s) / Demo

Description:

Assessment is done through a performance or demonstration of a skill near the end of the program. Examples of a capstone performance/demo could include leading a class through some material (e.g., teaching a class(teachers), leading a group (aerobics instruction),) , or demonstrating skills attained during the program (e.g., dance recital, mock surgery, fixing a car, forming welds).

Best Practices:

Before giving or requiring such an assessment, be sure to

- check that the performance/demo are related to outcome(s) to be measured.
- Inform students of the requirements of such a performance/demo.
- prepare a rubric so that all instructors agree on it and can use it to score, potentially, multiple sections of artifacts in a consistent way.
- determine whether faculty associated with the courses in the program are willing to act on the results of the exam.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.
- Assessment could be authentic.

Considerations:

- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Scoring will take time
- Norms generally are not available.

Capstone Project(s) / Paper(s)

Description:

Assessment is done through a final project or paper to be completed.

Best Practices:

Before giving or requiring such an exam, be sure to

- Inform students of the requirements for the project or paper including length, citation format, and other expectations.
- Determine whether the project is to be individual or group with clear expectations of each member especially for group projects.
- prepare a rubric so that all instructors agree on it and can use it to score, potentially, multiple sections of artifacts in a consistent way.
- determine whether faculty associated with the courses in the program are willing to act on the results of the exam.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- Can be authentic assessment
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Scoring takes time.
- Could be difficult to determine whether individual students are achieving outcomes in a group project/paper.
- Norms generally are not available.

Clinical Evaluation(s)

Description:

Clinical evaluation typically is an assessment performed by a professional certified in the field. Examples would include evaluation by health care professionals (radiography, sonography, nursing, e.g.).

Best Practices:

- The evaluator is someone current in the field that the faculty know/trust for honest feedback
- Obtain rubric from evaluator as to the skills to be checked (or provide a rubric if the evaluator is open to this)
- Determine the skills that are to be evaluated about the student.
- Faculty must be prepared to discuss the results obtained from the evaluations

Applicability:

- Generally will be authentic assessment
- Evaluated by someone current/knowledgeable in the field
- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Norms generally are not available.
- Different clinical sites may stress different particular skills making comparison "across the board" difficult in the program.

Course Embedded Exam(s)

Description:

A test of any kind designed to assess the pre-established outcomes and objective of the course.

Best Practices:

Before giving or requiring such an exam, be sure to

- check that questions on the exam are related to outcomes to be measured.
- Takes place at least partially in a proctored environment where the student or group of students being tested is not able to consult outside help;
- Making sure any testing "aids" (like cheat sheets, calculators, etc) the students are allowed to use are appropriate;
- Take home tests are given specific parameters.
- Test should be appropriate to not only the content but the style of the course (e.g. "hands on" versus "theory");
- check that questions are very clearly written so that there is no ambiguity as to the answer.
- distribute types and number of questions appropriately for the outcomes to be measured.
- prepare a rubric so that all instructors agree on it and can use it to score, potentially, multiple sections of artifacts in a consistent way.
- determine whether faculty associated with the courses in the program are willing to act on the results of the exam.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Appropriate mixes of essay and objective questions allow faculty to address various types of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- If well-constructed, they are likely to have good validity.
- Because local faculty write the exam, they are likely to be interested in results and willing to use them.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- These exams are likely to be less reliable than published exams.
- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Creating and scoring exams takes time.
- Traditional testing methods have been criticized for not being "authentic."
- Norms generally are not available.

Course Embedded Paper(s)/Projects

Description:

Any written item, structured learning activity, or project that determines whether students are learning pre-established outcomes and objectives of the course.

Best Practices:

- Takes place at least partially in a class or group of classes;
- Appropriate mixes of essay, objective questions, production of visual materials/objects, use of technology -- while sparking creativity and critical thinking;
- Clear rubric for assessment;
- If group work is required, make group member expectations clear and assessed commensurately.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Appropriate mixes of essay and objective questions allow faculty to address various types of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- If well-constructed, they are likely to have good validity.
- Because local faculty write the exam, they are likely to be interested in results and willing to use them.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Scoring takes time.
- May not be an authentic assessment.
- Norms generally are not available.

Course Embedded Performance(s) / Demo

Description:

Assessment is done through a performance or demonstration of a skill. Examples could include leading a class through some material (e.g., teaching a class(teachers), leading a group (aerobics instruction),) , or demonstrating skills attained during the program (e.g., dance recital, mock surgery, fixing a car, forming welds).

Best Practices:

Before giving or requiring such an assessment, be sure to

- check that the performance/demo are related to outcome(s) to be measured.
- Inform students of the requirements of such a performance/demo.
- prepare a rubric so that all instructors agree on it and can use it to score, potentially, multiple sections of artifacts in a consistent way.
- determine whether faculty associated with the courses in the program are willing to act on the results of the exam.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.
- Assessment could be authentic.

Considerations:

- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Scoring will take time
- Norms generally are not available.

Course Embedded Project(s)

Description:

Any project(s) that determines whether students are learning pre-established outcomes and objectives of the course.

Best Practices:

- Takes place at least partially in a class or group of classes;
- Appropriate mixes of essay, objective questions, production of visual materials/objects, use of technology -- while sparking creativity and critical thinking;
- Clear rubric for assessment;
- If group work is required, make group member expectations clear and assessed commensurately.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Appropriate mixes of essay and objective questions in written work allow faculty to address various types of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- If well-constructed, they are likely to have good validity.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Scoring takes time.
- May not be an authentic assessment.
- Norms generally are not available.

Current Student Survey(s) / Interview(s) / Focus Groups

Description:

Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups are all methods of indirect assessment. These assessment methods can be used to collect self-assessments of learning by students as well as provided feedback on their satisfaction with the program and suggestions for improvement. Whereas, "surveys generally have a preponderance of close-ended questions…interviews and focus groups rely more on open-ended questions" (Allen, 2006, p.180).

Surveys – "surveys elicit information about people's beliefs, experiences, or attitudes" (Allen, 2004, p. 104). Common survey formats can include a multitude of formats such as, checklists, classification, ranking, likert scale, open ended questions, etc. Surveys can be mailed, emailed, or placed online, allowing respondents to be reached asynchronously and at a distance.

Interviews – "involve a conversation, or questions and answers, between interviewers and interviewees, and they provide a sense of immediacy and personal attention that often is lacking with surveys" (Allen, 2004, p. 113). In addition, "interviews are generally done with small, representative samples (Allen, 2006, p. 199).

Focus Groups – "planned discussions among small groups of participants who are asked a series of carefully constructed questions about their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences….[and] can provide in-depth, useful feedback about programs" (Allen, 2004, p. 118). Focus groups are "small (usually six to ten people), all members fully participate in the discussion, and the facilitator does not follow a tightly structured script" (Allen, 2006, p. 201).

Best Practices:

Suggestions for best practices for writing effective close-ended and open-ended questions can be found on page 182-185 of Assessing General Education Programs by Mary J. Allen.

Surveys: "Faculty should create short, focused surveys that deliberately address specific issues, and each item should serve a purpose" (Allen, 2004, p. 105). All the questions in the survey should directly relate to the outcomes and sometimes surveys can be embedded in the curriculum.

Interviews: "Interviews are best done by neutral parties….and should be conducted to elicit complete, honest opinions and to protect the privacy and confidentiality of respondents" (Allen, 2006, p. 199). For tips on effective interviewing see pages 199-200 of Assessing General Education Programs by Mary J. Allen. For developing an interview script see pages 115-117 of Assessing Academic programs in Higher Education by Mary J. Allen.

Focus Groups: "[Treat] potential respondents with respect and [provide] information about the importance of the study….to avoid potential problems of respondent apathy" (Allen, 2006, p. 125).

"Neutral focus group leaders who are not program stakeholders are recommended" (Allen, 2004, p. 119) to conduct focus groups. You want the focus group to be conducted by "neutral parties who are unlikely to bias responses or their interpretation" (Allen, 2006, p. 204).

Applicability:

"Indirect assessment data might provide information that will be useful if we are disappointed in the direct assessment results, such as ideas for course activities and assignments that students believe help them learn about critical thinking" (Allen, 2006, p.133).

Considerations:

 "Faculty and others who might be asked to make changes based on assessment findings should be interested in assessment results, and they should be flexible and creative when identifying solutions to problems" (Allen, 2006, p. 125).

Focus group "facilitators must be able to establish rapport with participants and generate their trust; and they must manage the discussion to engage all participants, elicit the full range of opinions, and keep the process focused on project goals" (Allen, 2004, p. 119).

Employer Survey(s)/Interview(s)/Advisory Groups

Description:

There are different ways to assess a program using this method. One type of employer or Advisory Group survey/interview would be to provide a survey as to the types of skills that are desired for graduates to fill openings in the workforce (e.g.). For assessment of student skills in a program, this type of assessment would be filled out by the employer or internship director about the performance of a student.

Best Practices:

Surveys – "surveys elicit information about people's beliefs, experiences, or attitudes" (Allen, 2004, p. 104). Common survey formats can include a multitude of formats such as, checklists, classification, ranking, likert scale, open ended questions, etc. Surveys can be mailed, emailed, or placed online, allowing respondents to be reached asynchronously and at a distance.

Interviews – "involve a conversation, or questions and answers, between interviewers and interviewees, and they provide a sense of immediacy and personal attention that often is lacking with surveys" (Allen, 2004, p. 113). In addition, "interviews are generally done with small, representative samples (Allen, 2006, p. 199).

- Surveys should be relatively short so as not to burden the reviewer with lots of materials to complete.
- Questions on the survey should be aligned with the outcomes to be measured and clearly written.
- Student grades should be dependent on having the survey completed, otherwise supervisors often see these types of forms as optional.
- The survey should be filled out by someone familiar with the student (not someone who has had no contact with the student)

Applicability:

"Indirect assessment data might provide information that will be useful if we are disappointed in the direct assessment results, such as ideas for course activities and assignments that students believe help them learn about critical thinking" (Allen, 2006, p.133).

- Provides information about student learning external (practitioners) to program faculty.
- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- Scoring takes time.
- Norms generally are not available.
- Faculty must be willing to use the results from the surveys/interviews.

External Licensure Exam

Description:

External licensure exams can be used to assess student's ability in their field.

Best Practices:

- Research the Professional Organization/ Licensure for your specific program to find a Licensure that will align with your program and that would be beneficial to the student's career and the programs assessment.

Applicability:

- This Licensure can be used as part of the class and/or the final exam for the program.
- The results from this Licensure can be used to assess the student's ability and knowledge in their field of study.
- Can be authentic assessment

Considerations:

- The results from the Licensure must be available to collect data.
- All students completing the program must take the Licensure – if the licensure is optional, it is possible that NO data would be generated.
- Students should be aware of any cost associated with the licensure.

Focus Group(s)

Focus Groups are a method of indirect assessment. This assessment method can be used to provide feedback on their satisfaction with the program and suggestions for improvement. Whereas, "surveys generally have a preponderance of close-ended questions…interviews and focus groups rely more on open-ended questions" (Allen, 2006, p.180).

Focus Groups – "planned discussions among small groups of participants who are asked a series of carefully constructed questions about their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences….[and] can provide in-depth, useful feedback about programs" (Allen, 2004, p. 118). Focus groups are "small (usually six to ten people), all members fully participate in the discussion, and the facilitator does not follow a tightly structured script" (Allen, 2006, p. 201).

Best Practices:

Focus Groups: "[Treat] potential respondents with respect and [provide] information about the importance of the study….to avoid potential problems of respondent apathy" (Allen, 2006, p. 125).

"Neutral focus group leaders who are not program stakeholders are recommended" (Allen, 2004, p. 119) to conduct focus groups. You want the focus group to be conducted by "neutral parties who are unlikely to bias responses or their interpretation" (Allen, 2006, p. 204).

Applicability:

- "Indirect assessment data might provide information that will be useful if we are disappointed in the direct assessment results, such as ideas for course activities and assignments that students believe help them learn about critical thinking" (Allen, 2006, p.133).
- Can be done with external members such as business people that hire graduates of the program or other professionals in the field.

Considerations:

- "Faculty and others who might be asked to make changes based on assessment findings should be interested in assessment results, and they should be flexible and creative when identifying solutions to problems" (Allen, 2006, p. 125).
- Focus group "facilitators must be able to establish rapport with participants and generate their trust; and they must manage the discussion to engage all participants, elicit the full range of opinions, and keep the process focused on project goals" (Allen, 2004, p. 119).

Graduate Survey(s)/Interview(s)/Focus Groups

Description:

Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups are all methods of indirect assessment. These assessment methods can be used to collect self-assessments of learning by students as well as provided feedback on their satisfaction with the program and suggestions for improvement. Whereas, "surveys generally have a preponderance of close-ended questions…interviews and focus groups rely more on open-ended questions" (Allen, 2006, p.180).

Surveys – "surveys elicit information about people's beliefs, experiences, or attitudes" (Allen, 2004, p. 104). Common survey formats can include a multitude of formats such as, checklists, classification, ranking, likert scale, open ended questions, etc. Surveys can be mailed, emailed, or placed online, allowing respondents to be reached asynchronously and at a distance.

Interviews – "involve a conversation, or questions and answers, between interviewers and interviewees, and they provide a sense of immediacy and personal attention that often is lacking with surveys" (Allen, 2004, p. 113). In addition, "interviews are generally done with small, representative samples (Allen, 2006, p. 199).

Focus Groups – "planned discussions among small groups of participants who are asked a series of carefully constructed questions about their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences….[and] can provide in-depth, useful feedback about programs" (Allen, 2004, p. 118). Focus groups are "small (usually six to ten people), all members fully participate in the discussion, and the facilitator does not follow a tightly structured script" (Allen, 2006, p. 201).

Best Practices:

Surveys: "Faculty should create short, focused surveys that deliberately address specific issues, and each item should serve a purpose" (Allen, 2004, p. 105). All the questions in the survey should directly relate to the outcomes and sometimes surveys can be embedded in the curriculum.

Interviews: "Interviews are best done by neutral parties….and should be conducted to elicit complete, honest opinions and to protect the privacy and confidentiality of respondents" (Allen, 2006, p. 199). For tips on effective interviewing see pages 199-200 of Assessing General Education Programs by Mary J. Allen. For developing an interview script see pages 115-117 of Assessing Academic programs in Higher Education by Mary J. Allen.

Focus Groups: "[Treat] potential respondents with respect and [provide] information about the importance of the study….to avoid potential problems of respondent apathy" (Allen, 2006, p. 125).

"Neutral focus group leaders who are not program stakeholders are recommended" (Allen, 2004, p. 119) to conduct focus groups. You want the focus group to be conducted by "neutral parties who are unlikely to bias responses or their interpretation" (Allen, 2006, p. 204).

Applicability:

- "Indirect assessment data might provide information that will be useful if we are disappointed in the direct assessment results, such as ideas for course activities and assignments that students believe help them learn about critical thinking" (Allen, 2006, p.133).
- Can be done with current professionals in touch with the latest updates/changes in the field (assuming that the graduates have been out of the program for some time)
- Can provides information to the program about what current employers are desiring in the field
- Can provide more general feedback to a program based on what worked well and what could be improved now that graduates are professionals in the field.

Considerations:

- "Faculty and others who might be asked to make changes based on assessment findings should be interested in assessment results, and they should be flexible and creative when identifying solutions to problems" (Allen, 2006, p. 125).
- Focus group "facilitators must be able to establish rapport with participants and generate their trust; and they must manage the discussion to engage all participants, elicit the full range of opinions, and keep the process focused on project goals" (Allen, 2004, p. 119).
- The response rate for graduate surveys is often low and could generate more polarizing responses.

Mock Professional Exam(s)

Description:

Assessment is done through an exam developed by the program faculty at the end of the program as practice for a professional certification exam.

Best Practices:

Before giving or requiring such an exam, be sure to

- check that questions on the exam are related to outcome(s) to be measured.
- check that questions are very clearly written so that there is no ambiguity as to the answer.
- check that the exam has questions similar to the actual professional exam in terms of style and content.
- distribute types and number of questions appropriately for the outcome(s) to be measured.
- prepare a rubric so that all instructors agree on it and can use it to score, potentially, multiple sections of artifacts in a consistent way.
- determine whether faculty associated with the courses in the program are willing to act on the results of the exam.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Appropriate mixes of essay and objective questions allow faculty to address various types of learning outcomes
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- If well-constructed, they are likely to have good validity.
- Because local faculty write the exam, they are likely to be interested in results and willing to use them.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.
- Scoring rubrics may be known or available for the professional exam which could then be used.

Considerations:

- These exams are likely to be less reliable than published exams.
- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Creating and scoring exams takes time.
- Traditional testing methods have been criticized for not being "authentic."
- Norms generally are not available.

Portfolio(s)

Description:

There are several types of portfolios. Two that work best for assessment are called Showcase and Assessment. A Showcase Portfolio is where best work is highlighted. An assessment portfolio is to document what has been learned on outcomes and objectives. This is where students demonstrate competency on specific outcomes/objectives through student and/or faculty selected assignments that best meet the criteria.

Best Practices:

Some considerations before assigning a portfolio:

- What is the purpose of the requirement–to document student learning, to demonstrate student development, to learn about students' reflections on their learning, to create a document useful to students, to help students grow through personal reflection on their personal goals?
- What elements will be required in the portfolio–evidence only from courses in the discipline, other types of evidence, evidence directly tied to learning outcomes, previously graded products or clean copies?
- Will students be graded on the portfolios? If so, how and by whom?
- How will the portfolios be assessed to evaluate and improve the program?
- What will motivate students to take the portfolio assignment seriously?
- Who "owns" the portfolios–students or the program?
- Who has access to the portfolios and for what purposes?
- How will student privacy and confidentiality be protected?
- Will all faculty involved agree on the type of content and grading rubrics?
- Will all faculty involved agree on how to use the results to improve the program/courses?

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for and pride in their learning.
- Students may become more aware of their own academic growth.
- Can be used for developmental assessment and can be integrated into the advising process to individualize student planning.
- Can help faculty identify curriculum gaps, lack of alignment with outcomes.
- Students can use portfolios and the portfolio process to prepare for graduate school or career applications.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.
- E-portfolios or CD-ROMs can be easily viewed, duplicated, and stored.

Considerations:

- Requires faculty time to prepare the portfolio assignment and assist students as they prepare them.
- Requires faculty analysis and, if graded, faculty time to assign grades.
- May be difficult to motivate students to take the task seriously.
- May be more difficult for transfer students to assemble the portfolio if they haven't saved relevant materials.
- Students may refrain from criticizing the program if their portfolio is graded or if their names will be associated with portfolios during the review.
- Concerns with 're-grading' graded work
- Concerns with what is being graded (is it content, presentation, reflections)—must be specific in what you are grading and why
- Does it only contain 'best work' or work that fits the objective

Professional Certification

Description:

Professional Certification can be used to assess student's ability in their field.

Best Practices:

- Research the Professional Organization/ Certification for your specific program to find a Certification that will align with your program and that would be beneficial to the student's career and the programs assessment.

Applicability:

- This Certification can be used as part of the class and/or the final exam for the program.
- The results from this Certification can be used to assess the student's ability and knowledge in their field of study.
- Can be authentic assessment

Considerations:

- The results from the Certification must be available to collect data.
- All students completing the program must take the Certification – if the certification is optional, it is possible that NO data would be generated.
- Students should be aware of any cost associated with the certification.

Standardized Exam(s)

Description:

Assessment is done through an exam that is researched and often normed through national data.

Examples of standardized exams could include the SAT, ACT, or other researched exam from a particular discipline.

Best Practices:

Before giving or requiring such an exam, be sure to

- research that the exam has material related to your particular outcomes.
- consider the currency of the exam.
- evaluate the types of data that will be returned (will it cumulative, by section, by skill)
- determine whether faculty associated with the courses in the program are willing to act on the results of the exam.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- They generally are carefully developed, highly reliable, professionally scored, and nationally normed.
- They frequently provide a number of norm groups, such as norms for community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and comprehensive universities.
- Online versions of tests are increasingly available, and some provide immediate scoring.
- Some publishers allow faculty to supplement tests with their own items, so tests can be adapted to better serve local needs.

Considerations:

- Students may not take the test seriously if test results have no impact on their lives.
- These tests are not useful as direct measures for program assessment if they do not align with local curricula and learning outcomes.
- Test scores may reflect criteria that are too broad for meaningful assessment.
- Most published tests rely heavily on multiple-choice items which often focus on specific facts, but program learning outcomes more often emphasize higher-level skills.
- If the test does not reflect the learning outcomes that faculty value and the curricula that students experience, results are likely to be discounted and inconsequential.
- Tests can be expensive.
- The marginal gain from annual testing may be low.
- Faculty may object to standardized exam scores on general principles, leading them to ignore results.

Other Internal Measure

Description:

Any other type of assessment that does not fit with anything previously discussed. Examples could be assessment of student work by other students (either indirect or direct) or another type of assignment that doesn't fit with a project or exam.

Best Practices:

- Takes place at least partially in a class or group of classes;
- Clear rubric for assessment;
- Clear expectations for students to complete the measure.
- If group work is required, make group member expectations clear and assessed commensurately.
- Measure is consistent with outcomes to be assessed.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Scoring takes time.
- May not be an authentic assessment.
- Norms generally are not available.
- Assessment performed could be indirect

Other External Measure

Description:

Any other type of assessment that does not fit with anything previously discussed. Examples could be assessment of student work by other students (either indirect or direct) or another type of assignment that doesn't fit with a project or exam.

Best Practices:

- Clear rubric for assessment;
- Clear expectations for students to complete the measure.
- If group work is required, make group member expectations clear and assessed commensurately.
- Measure is consistent with outcomes to be assessed.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Scoring takes time.
- May not be an authentic assessment.
- Norms generally are not available.
- Assessment performed could be indirect

Other

Any other type of assessment that does not fit with anything previously discussed.

Best Practices:

- Clear rubric for assessment;
- Clear expectations for students to complete the measure.
- If group work is required, make group member expectations clear and assessed commensurately.
- Measure is consistent with outcomes to be assessed.

Applicability:

- Can provide direct evidence of student mastery of learning outcomes.
- Students generally are motivated to display the extent of their learning if they are being graded on the work.
- Can be integrated into routine faculty workloads.
- The evaluation process should directly lead faculty into discussions of student learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and student support services.

Considerations:

- Reliability and validity generally are unknown.
- Scoring takes time.
- May not be an authentic assessment.
- Norms generally are not available.
- Assessment performed could be indirect