

NOVEMBER 23, 2009

ASSESSMENT UPDATE

THE ASSESSMENT UPDATE IS PUBLISHED BY THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE TWICE A YEAR TO SHARE ASSESSMENT TAKING PLACE AT JEFFERSON COLLEGE AND TO FACILITATE CONVERSATION ABOUT ASSESSMENT BEST PRACTICES.

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

RON BOYER

SHIRLEY DUBMAN

SAMANTHA FAY

JULIE FRASER

SANDY FREY

JOE LANGE

DEDRIC LEE

BETTY LINNEMAN

MIKE LOGAN

TRISH LOOMIS, CHAIR

PATTY MCDANIEL

MINDY SELSOR

PURPOSE:

THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE SHALL BE TO SERVE AS THE CAMPUS-WIDE CONDUIT FOR ASSESSMENT. THE COMMITTEE WILL REVIEW DATA PERTINENT TO ONGOING ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CABINET. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE SHALL BE FORWARDED TO THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

Meeting the Challenge: Showing that Our Students are Learning

One way to show that our students are learning is by beginning with a question. For example, we may wonder, "Why are students taking so few notes?" Or, we might ask, "Are students learning anything from the information and activities we place on the Blackboard Course Page?" We can start by identifying any question or problem of interest to us.

In the process of systematically investigating our own questions about our teaching and our students' learning we can show that students are learning. And we improve our teaching and increase student learning in the process. This process is called Action Research.

To conduct simple Action Research, an instructor identifies a question or problem, seeks input from colleagues and/or published articles, tries something new, and then determines the impact of the change. It involves "a spiral of steps, each of which is comprised of planning, action and the evaluation of the result of the action" (Gurung & Schwartz, 2009, p.7). The result impacts what the instructor does in future semesters. The instructor also shares the research with colleagues so that they may consider adapting the information to improve student learning in their courses.



BASIC STEPS OF ACTION RESEARCH

1. Start by identifying a problem of interest to you
2. Review the literature to see how the problem has been addressed by others
3. Modify what you do
4. Measure student outcomes to see if your changes have impacted student learning
5. Share your findings with colleagues

Conducting a simple Action Research project is one option that meets the requirement of full-time faculty to document assessment at the course level. Action Research takes assessment a step further because it typically includes a review of the literature to see how the problem has been addressed by others. Also, sharing results with others is a critical piece of Action Research. Including students as co-researchers may be a way to offer students a High Impact Educational Experience (HIEE). See # 3 on p. 6 of this newsletter.

Are you interested in conducting Action Research? If so, please let Sandy Frey know by talking with her in person, calling her at ext. 348, or e-mailing her at szak@jeffco.edu. A group of Jefferson College faculty dialoguing with each other about their work to improve teaching and learning through the process of Action Research would show that we are dedicated to providing quality education and also show that our students are learning.

Spotlight on Faculty Assessment Efforts



Karen Amsden

Professor **Karen Amsden** assesses students' knowledge of safety in the Fundamentals of Nursing class. There is a section on Fire Management in which she reviews the acronym RACE. It stands for rescue, alarm, confine (the fire) and extinguish. The students are taught the sequence in which to remove patients, shown various transfer techniques and their role/responsibilities in that situation. She asks if there are any questions; then she proceeds to role-play the event. Two students act as the patients. One is situated in a wheelchair; the other is placed on the table to simulate a bedfast patient. She then picks a "nurse." She tells them that we are in a patient's room, shows them where the door is, where the alarm is and then tells them I am a little old lady. She then gets into character and has the little old lady find the fire in patient's room that she is visiting. She goes quickly hobbling out of the room yelling "fire." The "nurse" is then told to respond. The student will go into the room, forget to assign someone to watch the little old lady, forget to pull the alarm and proceed to rescue the other two patients. Meanwhile the little old lady will come back into the room, try to help get the patient out of the bed unsafely saying "I will save you" and the "nurse" inevitably takes the little old lady back out of the room. The "nurse" may remember to assign the patient to someone with prompting from other students then go back into the situation. Meanwhile, the little old lady will sneak back into the room looking for her dentures because the student watching her isn't paying attention to her. This scenario gets a lot of laughs but reinforces the material the students have just learned. After the two patients in the room are rescued the first time, the students discuss what needed to be done and how the situation should have been handled better. The scenario is then done a second time with different students and the results are much better and all live! Needless to say the students generally do very well on the test questions related to this topic.



Mary Baricevic

Associate Professor **Mary Baricevic** used an ethical dilemma to assess whether students in BUS101 were meeting the expected learning outcome addressing basic business principles. Students were given two weeks to complete written responses to questions associated with an ethical case. Students were given three tools to evaluate the case: ethics-check questions (Legal?, Fair?, Feelings about the decision?), a decision framework and Rushworth Kidder's five core values. Students prepared for the assignment by meeting in small groups during class to discuss "real-world" situations. Mary analyzed the students' responses and found that as a class, students successfully identified three out of the four ethical issues associated with the case. The only ethical issue students did not identify was "the placing of undue pressure on employees to behave in an unethical manner." Mary determined that the class as a whole met the expected learning outcome; students are aware of ethical business principles needed for future business courses. She repeated the case study the next semester and the class as a whole identified all four key issues. Mary plans to continue using ethical dilemmas to facilitate student learning.



Don Boyer

Professor **Don Boyer** allows students the opportunity to become aware of the four dominant decision making styles in his Principles of Management course. A decision making style assessment is administered to all students who answer a series of questions requiring them to use their personal preferences to make decisions over a wide range of circumstances. The scoring of the assessment indicates each student's dominant decision making style; Directive, Analytical, Behavioral or Conceptual. Students then examine the attributes associated with each style to see if their dominant style is a true reflection of how they perceived themselves when making decisions. Students with different styles are then placed in groups for a project that requires them to make a decision which has to have a unanimous outcome. From this exercise students learn that everyone has a dominant preferred style when making decisions and that an understanding of these styles can improve communication within the field of management as well as other areas.



Bill Kaune

Adjunct instructor **Bill Kaune** teaches Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Technology classes that are continually building on lessons previously taught. He believes that one of the reasons for testing is to find out what the students have not yet understood. He has found that an answer of "yes" by the entire class, when asked if they understood a principle, does not mean a thing. If a question on a test is missed by more than 30 percent of the class it will continue to appear on following tests until it is almost 100 percent fully understood. He is more concerned that students comprehend the material by the end of the class than when they are first exposed to it.

Spotlight on Faculty Assessment Efforts



Blake Carroll

Professor **Blake Carroll** uses Photography Critiques to assess the extent to which students meet expected learning outcomes, such as employing intermediate digital photographic techniques. In a Photography Critique, each student displays at least three pieces of work. Students then critique each others' work, commenting on what they like, don't care for, and also offering suggestions for improvement. For example, students may suggest shooting from a different angle, increasing saturation or cropping the photograph. In the advanced classes, Professor Carroll found that a mutual admiration society was beginning to form. Students largely praised each others' work and offered little criticism. To increase students' skills, he changed the way the critiques are conducted. Now students draw a slip of paper that says either Pro or Con. Students who draw Pro sit together as a group and comment on what they like. Students who draw Con sit together as a group and offer suggestions for improvement. At the end of the critique, the student whose work is being critiqued decides which group made the most compelling argument. Students' skills in employing intermediate digital photographic techniques have increased as a result of this change.



Linda Endebrock

Assistant Professor **Linda Endebrock**: For AutoCAD I : One assessment I used was to complete three drawings using AutoCAD computer software. One drawing was a site plan with no dimensions given but several line types used. The second was a boat with most of the dimensions given; the third was a hammer with tangent points and fillet corners used and the overall size given. Once the students completed the drawing part, they then set up the title block and determined the scale for plotting the drawing. The drawing is graded on completeness, accuracy, line types, appropriate scale, and title block information. After I lecture on a topic and present the assessment, I circulate around the room and individually answer questions for the students. This individual attention increases student learning by focusing on what their obstacles are to understanding the topic. While I use tests to evaluate the student comprehension, the majority of their grade is based upon the scores on the drawings. This class is for college and Area Technical School students.



Samantha Fay

Instructor **Samantha Fay** uses a three-pronged approach in Intermediate Algebra to ensure students meet the expected learning outcome of factoring cubes by following a formula. First, she shows how to work a problem. Then she and students complete some problems together. Finally, Samantha walks amongst the class observing as students work a problem on their own. She makes sure students follow the process correctly. This allows her to point out small mistakes early and provide individual instruction to students who are struggling with the process. While most students master the concept without individual attention, she is able to immediately help those who do not. Adding the immediate individual attention has increased overall student success in factoring cubes. In the future, Samantha plans to walk amongst students more frequently to ensure more students are meeting expected learning outcomes.



Bryna Pizzo

Adjunct instructor **Bryna Pizzo** assesses whether students in Basic Writing Skills II are meeting the Expected Learning Outcome of writing well-developed, unified, and coherent paragraphs. To meet this outcome, students first develop skills in identifying prepositional phrases, independent clauses, dependent clauses, subjects, verbs, and proper subject-verb agreement. Students complete practice exercises, write paragraphs and use MyWritingLab, a web-based resource, to develop skills. As students work to develop skills, Bryna continuously reviews their work and addresses their weaknesses. Bryna determined that by the end of the course a large discrepancy existed in the extent to which students in the course met the expected learning outcome of writing well-developed, unified and coherent paragraphs. Students who did not meet the outcome had something in common: lack of practice due to missing assignments. In order to improve the outcome, she plans to set aside more class time for work in MyWritingLab and increase the number of practice exercises. After she makes this change, she will assess its impact on students' learning.

Office of Civil Rights Compliance Review

In May of 2009, an on-site civil rights compliance review was conducted at Jefferson College. The purpose of the review was to ensure that we are providing access to educational programs in compliance with the requirements of federal Civil Rights Statutes. These statutes cover areas such as race, color, national origin, gender, and people with disabilities.

Policies, procedures, and practices that assure compliance with civil rights regulations were reviewed in the following areas:

- Administrative
- Recruitment
- Admissions
- Student Financial Assistance
- Counseling & Prevocational Programs
- Students with Disabilities
- Accessibility
- Comparable Facilities
- Work Study, Cooperative Education, Job Placement, Apprenticeship Training
- Employment
- Site Selection & Student Eligibility Criteria

Overall, the College received a very positive review, having met the criteria in each of the areas with the exception of some issues in the Accessibility section. The College submitted a Voluntary Compliance Review form outlining the actions it will take to address those concerns.

As a result of this review, Jefferson has already begun making improvements to the facilities. It is anticipated that by July 2010, all the issues will be addressed. For example, the slope of accessible parking spaces will be reduced, hand rails will be installed at the JCA third floor entrance, grab bars will be added to handicapped stalls and hot water pipes will be covered in the lavatories. The goal is to provide a safer and more accessible environment for our students, faculty and staff, and community.

OOPS!

It Should Have Worked...

During my first year of teaching, in my Intro to Photoshop class I decided to break the students into groups for a project, giving the students a feel for working with others. In this project the students were to develop a type of business and create an original logo for it. I decided to give them complete artistic freedom in design and in selecting the business type. I quickly realized that complete artistic freedom was a bad choice. Apparently, we have different opinions on what is "school appropriate." Those projects were quickly filed into the back of my file cabinet, and now all of my projects have a specific "appropriate" subject matter. — Greg Simos

Meet the 2008-2009 Linda Johnston Excellence in Assessment Award Recipient

*Dr. Amy Kausler*

Psychology Professor, Jefferson College alum, and indefatigable assessor is the 2008-2009 Assessment Award Recipient. Amy has taught psychology for 17 years at Jefferson College, 9 of those years full time.

Because of the recent emphasis on assessment at Jefferson College as we prepared for the HLC visit, there have been many opportunities for conversations about assessment. According to Amy, “These conversations have given me an opportunity to disseminate information about successful assessment practices, and to discuss ways that assessment can foster the development of positive change on campus and within the courses that I teach.”

For example, Amy had several opportunities to share information about the Student Response System “Clickers,” including how this technology can be used in assessment. In June of 2008 she co-presented at the Educational Technology Workshop at St. Charles Community College about “Engaging Students with Clicker Technology,” and in April of 2008 she co-presented at the HELIX conference about “Engaging Audiences: The Numerous Institutional Uses of Clicker Technology.” In May of 2008 she assisted at an in-service training at Fox High School for educators planning to use clickers in their classrooms.

Never tiring, she helped to co-coordinate the first “Conversations in Psychology” meeting with adjunct faculty members from the psychology department. The meeting provided an opportunity for adjunct faculty members and full-time faculty members to discuss course specific information including course expectations (including assessment logs) and ideas for activities in the psychology classroom.

Her students participate in a variety of assessment methods throughout the semester. A few examples include the think-pair-share method, “psychological perspectives” (her version of the muddy water/minute paper), and drawing/artwork representation of concepts discussed during class. Another

approach that is frequently used in her classes is the student response system, or “clickers.” Following the discussion of materials (or sometimes as an introduction to the materials), a question about the course concept is presented to students through a power point slide. The question has several response options, and students select their response by using a “clicker.” The responses from the students are then tallied and a chart appears detailing their compiled responses.

Amy is always searching for novel methods of assessment. For example, in General Psychology she showed a video clip (through the Intelcom Video Repository) that illustrates “aversion conditioning in animals,” then asked the students to write a paragraph using terminology from the course to explain the behaviors illustrated through the video clip. This summative assessment provided students with the opportunity to apply what they learned in class to a “real world” situation, and provided an opportunity to assess the students’ knowledge of the course content.

Amy said, “I use the results of my assessment methods in classes to make changes in the presentation of course content. When students do not understand materials, then the information is re-introduced, often in a different manner with new examples and illustrations. For example, when students are incorrect on a ‘clicker’ question, then they sometimes have a ‘think-pair-share’ time, where students will divide into pairs and convince each other that their response was the correct response. The slide is then reset, students respond to the same question, and often the correct response greatly increases – confirming that the students now have a better understanding of the materials. When a series of questions are commonly missed by students, this raises her awareness that the content might be difficult to understand, and more time and attention will be given to the materials during the same semester and when the content is taught in future semesters.”

In addition to her focus on her own courses, Amy has been involved in assessment on a departmental level. She is currently working with her colleague, Leslie Buck, to pilot a “multi-section course assessment” effort within the psychology department. In the long run, Amy believes, “A team approach to assessment fosters collegiality and demonstrates departmental efforts to promote student success.”

From the Office of Research and Planning and the CTL

Reporting High Impact Educational Experiences to DHE

Do you teach a course that includes a “high impact educational experience (HIEE)?” Courses at Jefferson College that utilize HIEE will be flagged beginning this semester so that these experiences can be reported for our graduating students next fall. Why? Reporting is required by the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE). Imperatives for Change (IFC), an MDHE document responding to Missouri Legislature directives, lists Indicator 2E1 as the “Percentage of students participating in high impact learning activities such as internships, study abroad, student faculty research and service learning.”

Our accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), encourages HIEE’s. For example, the following is given as an example of evidence of Engagement and Service (Criterion 5): “The organization’s educational programs connect students with external communities” (Handbook of Accreditation, p. 3.2-17). Jefferson students connect with our community as part of coursework in many ways, including field experiences, Service Learning projects, and practica.

MDHE requested that the Missouri Assessment Consortium (MAC) very specifically define high impact educational experiences for state reporting (see below).

MAC Assumptions for High Impact Educational Experiences

- “HIEEs are substantive activities significantly correlated to student learning and development
- Reporting HIEEs is based on clear and unambiguous definitions of practices, and require assessments and documentation of student learning. This clarity allows for easier recording and comparability, while excluding other worthwhile experiences without clear definitions or assessment potential.
- Significant time commitments and intensity of effort are critical components of HIEE. Time on task, effort, and sustained intellectual engagement are critical factors in learning. While some high impact common intellectual experiences may occur over brief periods of time, we focus upon those requiring persistent and sustained effort or engagement.”

MAC Definition

“To be reported as a HIEE, the educational experience(s) must:

- be for institutionally transcribed credit
- include time on-task equivalent to at least one semester credit hour (normally 15 contact hours)
- have identified learning outcome(s) to be addressed and evaluated
- require documentation of student’s work and the evaluation of that work
- be from one or more of the following categories:
(Inclusion for reporting requires an experience to meet not only the above general definitional elements but the specific descriptions below. Experiences sharing a similar name may not necessarily meet the requirements. Not all Learning Communities, Service Learning activities, etc. will count. Only those meeting the rigor of the following definitions.)

- 1. Learning Communities:** Must involve a) two or more linked courses, or b) a course and an established external learning community, that include cooperative assignments involving two or more students. The learning community must identify one or more activities that together meet the HIEE definitional requirements.
- 2. Collaborative Assignments and Projects:** The 15 on-task hours must be committed to one assignment or project that involves a student and at least one other participant.
- 3. Student-Faculty Research/Creative Activity:** Student must work with an identified faculty person with significant involvement in the design, collection, analysis and write-up of the research project. For a creativity activity, the student must play a key role in the design and production of the created product.
- 4. Service Learning:** The 15 on-task hours must be committed to a single or multiple integrated, structured learning experience(s). Experience must include an evaluation of the student’s ability to apply the identified knowledge and skill(s) in a real world context.
- 5. Internships/Practica/Student Teaching:** Student must
 - a) be supervised and assessed on agreed-upon outcomes and
 - b) preferably complete a project, paper, or oral presentation that is approved by the sponsoring faculty member upon the completion of the internship/practicum.
- 6. Focused Field Experiences:** The 15 on-task hours must be committed to a single or multiple integrated, structured learning experience(s). The student must be supervised and assessed on agreed-upon outcomes and complete a project, paper, oral presentation, or alternative integrative evaluation.
- 7. Study Abroad:** The student must be supervised and assessed on agreed-upon outcomes and complete a project, paper, oral presentation, or alternative integrative evaluation.”

If you are interested in adding a “high impact educational experience,” such as a collaborative assignment or Service Learning project, to a course you teach, please contact Sandy Frey in the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Assessment in Non-Academic Areas of the College

The Jefferson College Child Development Center: More Than Just Fun and Games

The Jefferson College Child Development Center is a Missouri Accredited and state licensed facility approved to serve 100 children, ages two through twelve. The Center is a hub of activity as learning takes place not only among the children, but also with Area Technical School and college students enrolled in early childhood education courses who utilize the Center for observations, labs, and as a practicum site. Staff members at the Center embrace assessment as an integral and necessary component of operating a high quality early childhood and school-age program.

Assessment at the Center serves three specific purposes:

- to plan and adapt curriculum to meet each child's developmental and learning needs;
- to help teachers and families monitor each child's progress; and
- to evaluate program effectiveness for both the child and the adult learner.

Lead Teachers at the Center are trained in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Project Construct. This curriculum framework targets twenty-nine goals that guide teacher assessment in domains such as physical and cognitive; as well as disciplines such as literacy and science. Teachers collect and record information about the children using varied authentic assessments including interviews, observations, and work samples. This collected information combined with the teacher's Project Construct goals is then used to customize a learning environment and classroom experiences that meet each child's individual needs, interests, and strengths.



Individual developmental screenings are administered during the first semester of each child's enrollment. These screenings help to assess the child's progress with developmental milestones. Information gained through screening is then used to guide planning, develop interventions with parents (as needed), and when appropriate, refer children in need of additional diagnostic testing.

The Center's on-going and successful pursuits for accreditation and grant funding have created numerous opportunities for on-going evaluation by external agencies. Meeting established accreditation criteria assures families that the Center adheres consistently to high standards to maintain a quality educational program for their children. Staff members in the Center regularly provide outcome reports, attend seminars and conferences, and host visits with these external agencies to confirm that the strict standards established by these organizations are maintained.

Continued...



Continued from page 7...

Surveys are also used as an assessment tool in the Center. A family questionnaire is distributed annually to provide a means to collect feedback from parents and assess program effectiveness. Staff members collect the surveys, provide feedback to the families, and immediately address any issues that are raised. For example, the Center secured grant funding and developed a Parents as Teachers program based on parent feedback from a recent survey. These surveys consistently receive high ratings and positive comments. An additional questionnaire has been designed for the high school and college lab and practicum students to better assess and meet their learning needs. This survey will be implemented fall 2009.

As the old saying goes, there is always room for improvement. On-going assessment is a guiding principle in the Jefferson College Child Development Center promoting continuous improvement in program quality while creating an effective environment for children to grow and learn.



ASSESSMENT RESOURCE

Association of American Colleges and Universities

<http://www.aacu.org/resources/assessment/index.cfm>

The Assessment webpage of the AAC&U website includes information about several initiatives related to assessment such as the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) initiative. VALUE Rubrics are available in 15 areas.

Reference: Gurung, R. A. & Schwartz, B.M. (2009). *Optimizing teaching and learning: Practicing pedagogical research*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Jefferson College  1000 Viking Drive
Hillsboro, MO 63050
(636) 797-3000 or 942-3000
www.jeffco.edu

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