

Embedded Assessment, Artifact Assessment, Portfolio Review, and Other: Determining the Locus of Assessment Processes

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“I’ve got my learning goals, now what?”

Assessing student learning in a program (including the core curriculum) can involve:

- Embedded assessment
 - Artifact assessment
 - Portfolio assessment
 - Standardized tests
 - Indirect assessment
 - Other indicators
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Remember: Assessment is...

“the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning.”

Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments and General Education by Barbara E. Walvoord (John Wiley & Sons, 2004, pp. 2-3.)

And remember why you're doing this

Assessment answers the question


What do you want students to learn, and how will you know?

So... *what's the best way to discover whether they have learned what you want?*

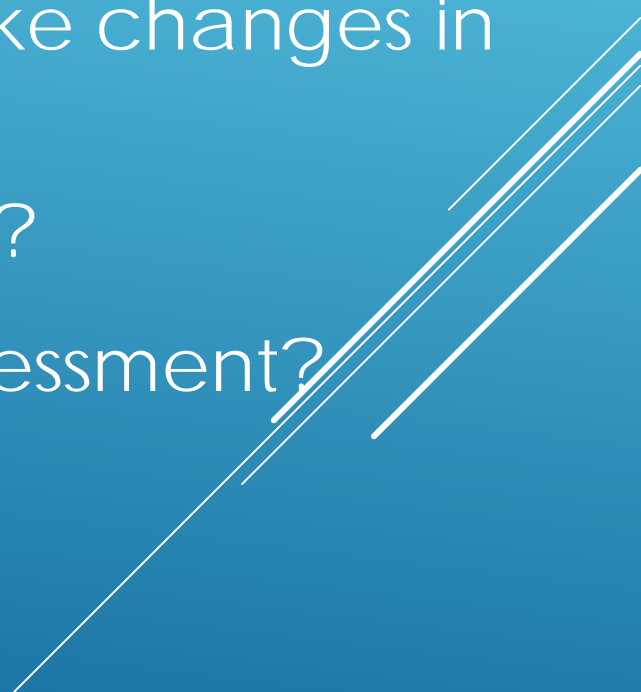
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Choosing a method

There are multiple ways to learn about student learning:

- Embedded assessment
 - Artifact assessment
 - Portfolio assessment
 - Standardized test assessment
 - Indirect assessment
 - Other indicators
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So how to decide on a method? (Criteria)

- What is the best way to find out what they have learned?
 - **What makes sense in your discipline? And to you?**
 - What method will help you identify where to make changes in your curriculum?
 - What kind of information do you have access to?
 - How much time do you have to dedicate to assessment?
 - What will be supported?
- 

Embedded Assessment

Using existing assignments, tests, or test items to measure student success with a learning goal.

[Stats and Engineering examples]

Data can be combined across courses to build up program assessment. Can involve *less effort* than other methods.

* May not be informative about mastery-level competence.

Artifact Assessment

Artifacts are student work products.
Often seen as the gold standard of direct assessment

Usually a committee evaluates a common assignment
(or an agreed-upon variety of assignments) for evidence
of specified learning goal(s).

Often done with a rubric.

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Artifact Assessment, cont.

Rubrics:

Matrix of criteria (rows) by level of achievement (ratings), with descriptions of work for scores in each cell.

AAC&U VALUE Rubrics (***V**alid **A**ssessment of **L**earning in **U**ndergraduate **E**ducation*) can be used with artifacts to assess typical core or program outcomes.

AAC&U VALUE rubrics

Intellectual and Practical Skills

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Reading
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork
- Problem solving

Personal and Social Responsibility

- Civic engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
- Global learning

Integrative and Applied Learning

- Integrative learning

Portfolio Assessment

Rather than a single student artifact, a collection of artifacts can be put into a portfolio for review

Either students choose artifacts, or faculty dictate, or both
Can show student development over time.

Best practice: Students also reflect on their artifacts

Can also be evaluated with rubrics.

Richer information, but more work.

Students can use portfolios for job applications, etc...

Standardized Tests

Many institutions assess student learning via standardized tests

- CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment)
- CAAP (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency)
- Major field tests (e.g., GRE subject tests)
- Indirect measures like NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement), Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory

Standardized Tests

Pro: Can compare across institutions, IR office collects the data (instead of faculty), scores are provided (no evaluation work)

Con: Can be difficult to close the loop, some concerns about validity, can lead to “teaching to the test”, expensive

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Standardized Tests: Surveys or Other

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<http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/study-instruments/>

A variety of psychological and other measures of attitudes, values, dispositions, etc.

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Indirect Assessment

Typically, what students think they've learned or their reports of experiences.


Typically via surveys (e.g, exit surveys by major departments) [Amanda has this!]

Valid information, usually seen as less compelling than direct assessment (of artifacts, etc.)

Can inform / support other assessment data. A good starting point.

Indirect Assessment via focus groups

Focus groups with samples of students, for example:

- Interview them about what worked in a program
 - Ask them about what they learned or did not
 - Have them review / comment on the program learning goals
 - (Advanced) Share direct assessment results with them for comment
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Other Indicators

- DFW reports
Grades of D, F, and Withdrawal rates from courses
Can identify issues with course sequences (prerequisites, for example) or student preparation
- Course evaluations
Indirect information about what challenged students
- Student choices (transcript review)
Are there courses that students avoid? Or courses students flock to? Does that interfere with sequencing designed to practice particular outcomes?

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Which means...

...using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available...

- **Time** – Try not to be too elaborate or time-consuming (sufficing)
- **Knowledge** – What goals are best measured? Which ones matter the most? Which are likely problematic or exceptional? What do the data mean?
- **Expertise** – Discipline-specific, authentic
- **Resources** – How well does the institution support this faculty work?

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