Nothing New About Assessment

All successful companies, small and large businesses, national and international corporations, and even the mom and pop candy stores routinely assess what is profitable and what is stagnating. All successful software and computer operating systems are continually reevaluated and updated by their makers for their usability, responsiveness, and adaptability. In American higher education, however, assessment of student learning struggles for respect and acceptance. Assessment of student learning is sometimes viewed with suspicion, carrying the same aversion as the scarlet “A” stitched into Hester Prynne’s dresses. But there is nothing new or unique or distressing about assessment. The ongoing process of outcomes assessment offers faculty the opportunity to improve weaknesses or shortcomings in their students’ general education skills that are so necessary to succeed academically, professionally, and personally. In a now-famous quote by Barbara E. Walvoord, assessment of student learning 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.” We encourage nothing more, but also nothing less.

General Education at BCC

General education (or GenEd) normally refers to those courses that are required of all or most undergraduate students at a higher education institution. According to the Middle States Commission of Higher Education’s Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, “A general education program—developed, owned, and reviewed by the institution’s faculty—should be purposeful, coherent, engaging, and rigorous. General education skills may be taught or developed as part of courses in the major, as separate courses, or through a decentralized distribution. However, the skills and knowledge derived from general education and the major should be...
Academic assessment is designed:

- To develop the GenEd skills BCC students need.
- To determine if students are achieving the learning outcomes of their courses and programs.
- To allow faculty to uncover redundancies in consecutive courses and/or link ideas across courses in progressive fashion.
- To discuss new technologies and software.
- To inspire faculty to improve delivery of class ideas and materials.
- To fulfill the mission of the college.
- To strengthen institutional commitment.
- To bring faculty together to discuss students’ needs.
- To keep student learning at the center of BCC.

BCC’s GenEd Proficiency: Global Awareness

Several departments incorporate global awareness into their programs and courses. One of the program-level outcomes in the Department of Biology is: apply scientific knowledge to the broader contexts of global ecology and human health, and a course learning outcome in BIO 12 is demonstrate an understanding of how industrialization and biotechnology have impacted global ecology and human health. In the Department of Health, Physical Education and Wellness, a unique outcomes assessment has been performed for consecutive semesters across five separate courses. The learning outcomes are inspired from the recommendations of the World Health Organization of the United Nations and reflect its global health policy.

In the Department of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, one program-level outcome is: utilizes knowledge of cultural influences and demonstrates cultural sensitivity when providing care and shows respect for patients’ culture, preferences, values, and needs. A program-level outcome to be met in the AAS degree program in the Department of Education and Reading is: identify the principles that govern effective interpersonal relations in the school setting.

These outcomes are designed to broaden our students’ awareness of the global and multi-cultural elements in the discipline, while deepening cultural sensitivities and connectedness. We congratulate the departments for assessing global awareness outcomes in their courses and programs.

Faculty Assessment Showcase

Thursday, December 6, 2012
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Closing the Loop: Using Assessment Data To Improve Student Learning

Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology