

Using Assessment for Improvement

Chris Tokpah, Ph.D.
Associate Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness

What is Outcomes Assessment (OA)?

- What do we expect students to be able to know and do (outcomes) ?
- How do we know if students have met our expectations (assessment)?
- How can we use the result from our assessment to improve learning (closing the loop)?

Why Assess?

- To help improve instruction
- To be accountable to stakeholders
- To attract future students

Why not use grades?

- Grade is often a function of individual instructor
- Grades do not provide information about students performance on discrete tasks

Benefits for Faculty

- Helps identify what's working/not working
- Facilitate interdisciplinary and intercampus discussion
- Provide concrete evidence to justify request for resources
- Provide assurance that students are experiencing the same core content

Common Concerns of Faculty

- Will OA encroach on academic freedom?
- Will OA lead to increase in workload?
- Will OA be used to evaluate faculty?
- Is this not leading to standardized testing?
- Is this a new fad that will go away when I wake up tomorrow?

Assessment at DCCC

- Evaluation at 3-levels
 - Course Assessment
 - Program Assessment
 - Program Review

Course Assessment

- Determine if students developed mastery of course learning competencies.
- Conducted, each time a course is taught, by an individual instructor or a group of instructors
- Provides immediate feedback
- Feedback must be used for course improvement (closing the loop)

How do I assess my course?

- Summative Assessment-make decision about mastery or lack thereof (at end of course).
 - Course-embedded Assessment
 - Difference between grading and assessment
- Formative Assessment-gather information to improve teaching and learning.
 - Classroom Assessment Techniques (Cross)

Course-embedded Assessment

- Questions embedded in the final exam/major tests
- Specific assignments that provide feedback about course competencies
- Common questions in test/exam across course sections

Course-embedded Assessment

- Rubrics used to grade writing /project /presentation
- Pre/post tests
- Samples of student work

Classroom Assessment Techniques

- Provide you with information about the effectiveness of your teaching methods
- Provide day-to-day feedback that can be applied immediately
- Provide useful information about what students have learned

Classroom Assessment Techniques

- One-Minute Paper
 - “Most important thing I learned today and what I understood least.” Review before next class meeting and use to clarify.
- Muddiest Point
 - Ask students to describe what they didn't understand and what they think might help.

Classroom Assessment Techniques

- Chain notes
 - Pass around an envelope with a question, each student write short response.
- Application article
 - Ask students to describe how major point applies to real-world situation.

Classroom Assessment Techniques

- Student-generated test questions
 - Divide class into groups and have each group generate questions for test. Use as many /similar questions as possible.
- Suggestion box
 - Put a box near the classroom door and ask students to leave notes about any class issue.

Classroom Assessment Techniques

- What strategies do you use in your class to determine whether students are learning the course material?
- Which of the techniques you learned today would you choose to pilot in your class?