

ASSESSMENT MATTERS

ASSESSMENT MATTERS SPECIAL SUMMER SERIES GETTING ORGANIZED—MAINTAINING OR MODIFYING YOUR ASSESSMENT PLAN

There are two main categories of data collected to assess overall success of a program: One category centers around general student data such as retention and graduation rates, enrollment, job placement, etc. The other centers around student learning. That is why all programs have program-level learning outcomes—those goals/skills/competencies that all the students, when they graduate from that program, have attained. It is relatively easy to get the first set of data through number-crunching of the university data base. However, assessing those program outcomes, especially in these changed times due to COVID-19, potentially might be problematic.

So, how do you maintain your assessment efforts and reporting? First, you should ask a few questions:

1. Which of your program outcomes might be impacted more than others at this time?
2. Are some of your outcomes un-assessable due to the inability to offer a certain course, internship, clinical experience or other experiential activity due to COVID-19?
3. Are there other methods/measures you might use to measure one or more outcomes that are more feasible or appropriate for the various changes in course offerings?

GOOD ASSESSMENT PRACTICE RECOMMENDS ONE DIRECT AND ONE INDIRECT ASSESSMENT MEASURE PER OUTCOME. BE SMART AND KEEP YOUR ASSESSMENT PLAN SUSTAINABLE BY STREAMLINING YOUR MEASURES.

Once you have reviewed your learning outcomes and have determined if adjustments need to be made, there are a few things you can do:

- Ask your faculty members about their ideas for assessing student learning, or assign an outcome to a small group of faculty members and have them develop an assessment measure.
- You do not need to assess every outcome every year, so organize your outcome assessment so that each outcome is measured at least once every two years or so. That way you can focus on one or two during a semester and the workload does not seem that overwhelming.
- Use online resources for ideas for measures. The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment ([NILOA](#)) has an [assignment library](#) in which users are invited to search for ideas. A variety of disciplines and assignment characteristics are available and all of the assignments have been vetted by faculty. If the actual assignments are not a good fit for your program/class, maybe they will give you some ideas of what you might develop.
- Assessing in key courses in your program such as a capstone course is ideal, as they are designed to be a culminating experience of the major coursework where students are typically expected to bring all their coursework and learning together in a project, portfolio, presentation, etc. Developing a detailed rubric or tool to evaluate the student learning in this situation is ideal. However, if no capstone is offered, doing assessment in upper-division courses can be just as effective.



Stay tuned! More tips to come.....