Déjà vu (All Over Again)

At a Professional Development Day session on October 20 at Florissant Valley, 100 + participants who gathered to interpret and discuss CCSSE results offered a number of reasons to explain the gaps in faculty and student perceptions of student engagement on selected issues. Interestingly enough, on October 26 at the IUPUI Assessment Institute in Indianapolis, 50 + participants from a variety of institutions who attended a similar session entitled, “More Than Keeping Score: Comparing Faculty and Student Perceptions of Engagement,” offered many of the same reasons.

After a brief introduction on STLCC’s experience with CCSSE / CCFSSE by John Cosgrove, Director of Institutional Research & Planning, the IUPUI participants were given the same series of cases used at STLCC—comparative results from both surveys—to consider. The cases included the following issues:

- Student Outcomes: How Much Does STLCC Contribute To Students Skills/Knowledge In: Acquiring a Broad General Education
- Student Outcomes: How Much Does STLCC Contribute To Students Skills/Knowledge In: Thinking Critically and Analytically
- Student Effort: How Often Do Your Students Skip Class
- Academic Challenge: How Challenging Are Your (Faculty) Examinations/Assignments?
- Student-Faculty Interaction: Quality of Student Relationships With Faculty?
- Faculty Value and Faculty Referral: How Important Is Academic Advising/Planning & How Often Do You Refer Students To Academic Advising/Planning

Upon dividing into groups, the IUPUI participants were asked to represent both faculty and student views on the selected cases. During their “report out,” groups volunteered the following observations on the issues discussed:

- Student Outcomes & General Education. As expected, faculty offered that they obviously have a better idea of “General Education” than students, and that students may “weigh out-of-class” activities more heavily than faculty usually allow.
- Student Outcomes & Critical Thinking. As was the case at STLCC, faculty felt that semantics contributed to the gap in understanding, and so faculty need to be more specific about what they mean by “critical thinking” with students to better address the clash of language and culture
- Student Effort & Skipping Class. Similar to STLCC, faculty participants at IUPUI felt that the definition of “skip” meant different things to faculty and students.
• Academic Challenge & Challenging Exams / Assignments. Whereas faculty believe that new technology and learner-centered approaches help students face the challenge more than ever before, “students” are dismayed by “tricky” (read here, stretching) maneuvers in both exams and assignments.

• Student-Faculty Interaction. Faculty interaction with students of the “Net Generation” is evolving much as teaching and learning is, and this presents new challenges to both.

• Faculty Value and Faculty Referral. Faculty at IUPUI felt that their evaluation of advising is “questionable,” especially since advising is often “outside of their sphere.”

Finally, these groups were asked to share suggestions and recommendations for bridging these perceptual gaps. Participants observed that with respect to many of the perceived gaps, communication was both the source and the solution to the problem.

As CCSSE and CCFSSE results are disseminated, more opportunities to discuss engagement and “best practices” used to encourage engagement will be offered. Until then, a variety of CCSSE and CCFSSE engagement PowerPoint presentations can be found at the IRP Assessment Portal (http://collegeweb.stlcc.edu/assessment/).

**More from IUPUI Assessment Institute**

The Assessment Institute participants are very generous in providing the handouts from their conference presentations. Following are a sampling of some the sessions Cosgrove and McDoniel attended.

**The Missing Pieces of the Student Attainment Puzzle: The NASPA Perspective**

Gwen Dungy, NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

FYI: Dr. Dungy, Executive Director of NASPA, began her career in student affairs as a counselor at the Meramec Campus.

**More Than Keeping Score: Comparing Faculty and Student Perceptions of Engagement**

Lawrence J. McDoniel and John Cosgrove, St. Louis Community College

The powerpoint for the session referred to above (“Déjà vu [All Over Again]”).

**Examine the Madison Area Technical College Process for Program and Department Development of Curriculum Portfolios**

This session, orchestrated by Mary L. Vlisides and Tina Rettler of Madison Area Technical College, describes an AQIP project that addresses gaps in information and communication among the faculty.

**Doing Assessment as if Learning Matters Most: Simple, Practical Classroom- and Course-Level Approaches**

Thomas A. Angelo, La Trobe University, Australia, who the “big cat” in CATs, did his usual well-organized and insightful workshop on the what matters most; i.e., assessment that emphasizes teaching and learning.

**Good Practice Abounds**

Trudy W. Banta and Karen E. Black, IUPUI, and Elizabeth A. Jones, West Virginia University, offered several examples of current good practice in assessment, among them STLCC’s “Mission-Based” assessment.
Most Colleges Are Learning What Students Are Learning [a press release]

Contrary to what many observers think, findings from a national study released today show that gathering information about what undergraduates learn during their studies is commonplace in most US colleges and universities. However, the results are not always used and reported in ways that could improve student accomplishment and inform the public about institutional performance.

Most institutions use multiple approaches to measure what happens to students during college in addition to assigning grades, with accreditation being the primary driver of such assessments. For example, most all colleges and universities (92%) use at least one assessment approach with samples of students intended to represent institutional performance; two thirds of all schools use three or more such approaches. And about 40% of all campuses use some standardized measure of general knowledge and skills which can be used to compare student performance across different institutions.

The 2009 report from the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) is based on information from more than 1,500 regionally accredited degree-granting institutions in the U.S. The NILOA study, titled “More Than You Think, Less Than We Need: Learning Outcomes Assessment in American Higher Education,” summarizes what colleges and universities are doing to measure student learning.

“The results are cause for cautious optimism, given that most colleges and universities are now using different approaches to determine how well students are performing in ways that are consistent with their missions,” says George Kuh, the NILOA director and professor of higher education at Indiana University.” For example, community colleges tend to use general knowledge assessments and other measures to determine if students have work-place skills and are ready for upper-level course work. In contrast, for-profit schools use a variety of approaches to demonstrate overall institutional performance in terms of student accomplishment, perhaps because of a greater need to demonstrate their educational quality.

The NILOA study is the first systematic attempt in more than a decade to find out what colleges and universities are doing to assess student learning and how they are using the results. The questions posed to chief academic officers focused on four key areas:

• The learning outcomes your institution measures,
• How you assess these outcomes and use the results,
• The major factors prompting assessment at your institution, and
• What is needed to advance learning outcomes assessment at your institution.

According to Molly Broad, president of the American Council of Education, “Now, more than ever, we must understand how well our students are learning so we can better target efforts to help students succeed.” David Shulenburger, vice president for academic affairs of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, says “NILOA is lifting the veil on the crucial matter of learning outcomes measurement and will help us better document and improve student learning.”

Other key findings from the study are:
• The most common uses of student learning outcomes data are for preparing for accreditation and responding to calls for accountability.
• Student outcomes information is least often used for evaluating faculty for promotion or for merit pay increases.
• Four fifths of all schools have one or more departments using portfolios of student work to assess outcomes linked to a specific program of study.
• The most selective colleges and universities collect information at rates comparable to their less selective counterparts, but tend not to use it as often.
• The greatest needs to advance student learning outcomes assessment are more faculty engagement followed by more assessment expertise.
• Most institutions conduct learning outcomes assessment on a shoestring, and one fifth of all institutions devote less than one person to the activity.
• No wonder that about half of all provosts said more resources are needed to do learning outcomes assessment better.

Carol Schneider, president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, is heartened that “so many institutions are assessing students’ work with authentic measures such as portfolios as they provide the best evidence of what students can actually do with their education.”

According to Stanley Ikenberry, a NILOA researcher and University of Illinois professor and interim president, “Colleges and universities must do more to use student outcomes assessment results to guide improvement in teaching and learning and to inform the public about institutional effectiveness. A key next step is to discover more about what is going on at the program level where faculty directly affect student learning.”


**Moving Toward AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program): StudentVoice Survey on Continuous Improvement**

The Higher Learning Commission states that “an organization formally applies to join AQIP when it understands both how quality improvement initiatives work and what they require — and how AQIP will work and what it will require.” The college’s mission-based assessment, self-study, and strategic planning processes have the college well positioned to move toward AQIP.

Continuous improvement processes like AQIP are most effective when they match organizational culture and climate. Consequently, AQIP requires that prospective members contemplate what this will mean prior to making application.

You will first need to make sure that your institution fully understands what AQIP is and what it will require of them. You will also need to make sure that your institution is committed to undertaking AQIP at all levels of the organization. Prior to admission, your institution will need to either perform or have concrete plans to perform some sort of self assessment. (http://www.aqip.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=180&Itemid=237)
To this purpose, the college’s Assessment Council has developed a faculty/staff survey to help assess the college’s current climate in regard to the following key AQIP principles: Focus, Collaboration, Involvement, Agility, Leadership, Foresight, Learning, Information, People, and Integrity. These principles underlie all of the AQIP categories, activities, and processes.

The survey was sent via StudentVoice on Monday, November 23. All full-time faculty, staff and administrators are asked to complete the survey by Friday, December 11 so that results of the survey may be shared during the Spring 2010 Service Days.

In Sight & On Site, On Campus and Off

Faculty Learning Community: Creating Significant Learning Experiences

This semester, a number of faculty at Florissant Valley have formed a learning community entitled “Creating Significant Learning Experiences.” Using a text and materials authored by Dee Fink, founding Director of the Instructional Development Program at the University of Oklahoma, this group has been revisiting the fundamental question for all teachers: "How can I create courses that will provide significant learning experiences for my students?"

Fink provides several conceptual and procedural tools that will be invaluable for all teachers when designing instruction. He takes important existing ideas in the literature on college teaching (among them, active learning and “educative assessment”), adds some new ideas (a taxonomy of significant learning, the concept of a teaching strategy), and shows how to systematically combine these in a way that results in powerful learning experiences for students.

Facilitated by Teresa Huether, Professional Development Coordinator at Florissant Valley, this learning community consists of the following members: Carol Berger, Neelima Bhavsar, Brian Bozek, Jeffery Forrest Drew Foster, Sharon Fox, Terrence Freeman, Joanne Galanis, Linda Hamberg, Stacy Hollins, Elida Kraja, Carol Lupardus, Mark Manteuffel, Scott Martin, Rokhaya Ndao, Donna Nelson, Rita Pernik, Rick Pescarino, Mark Taylor, Kevin Toal, and LaRhonda Wilson.

Campus-Based Assessment Project: Academic Challenge

The Behavioral Science Department at Meramec is conducting an assessment on “Academic Challenge” this semester. Given questions from both CCSSE and literature on assessment related to academic challenge, students enrolled in Behavioral Science courses in the fall completed a StudentVoice survey asking them about their perceptions of the challenge of the reading, studying, and assignment levels in their courses.

The department is currently in the process of analyzing the data. Next semester, faculty will get together in discipline groups to discuss what is happening in these courses and make the appropriate changes/实施 based on their interpretation of the data.
"Save the Date!!!"

Following is a table listing important events relative to assessment and AQIP scheduled for 2009 – 2010. Please include these in your “must do” calendars and plans for this academic year.

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri, Dec 4</td>
<td>Workshop: Assessment “Works” in Progress</td>
<td>Meramec</td>
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<td>Fri, Jan 29</td>
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<td>Fri, Feb 19</td>
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<td>Florissant Valley TC 110</td>
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<td>Fri, Mar 12</td>
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<td>Wildwood Multipurpose Rm 102 A</td>
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<td>Fri, April 30</td>
<td>12 pm – 3 pm (Assessment of Assessment)</td>
<td>Meramec</td>
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<td>Student Center 200 - 201</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Jan 13</td>
<td>Workshop: Assessment “Works” in Progress</td>
<td>Meramec BA 105</td>
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<td>April, 2010</td>
<td>Campus-Based [Divisions/Departments] Assessment Showcases</td>
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<td>[ specific campus dates tba ]</td>
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<td>Meramec SC 200-201</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 30, 2010</td>
<td>Assessment of Assessment Day</td>
<td>Meramec SC 200-201</td>
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Announcing ...

AAC & U Gen Ed and Assessment: Maintaining Momentum, Achieving New Priorities
Network for Academic Renewal Conference
February 18-20, 2010
Seattle, Washington
http://www.aacu.org/meetings/generaleducation/index.cfm

The conference will draw on AAC&U's long-standing projects and publications on general education reform including work to bring diversity, global, and civic learning into general education and models for advancing scientific and quantitative literacy through real-world curricula and problem-based pedagogies.

10th Annual Texas A&M University Assessment Conference
February 21-23, 2010
Hilton Conference Center
College Station, Texas
http://assessment.tamu.edu/conference/index.html

“Recognizing change as a powerful vehicle for achieving success is an important part of this year's conference theme. Our assessment community is interested not only in what is being done, but what changes are being made to that assessment process, what are the long term implications and plans, what are the next steps?”

League for Innovation Innovations 2010
March 28-31, 2010
Baltimore, Maryland
http://www.league.org/i2010/

Innovations 2010 is the premier event for professionals dedicated to improving organizational teaching and learning, and discovering new approaches for enhancing the community college experience. The conference provides a tremendous forum for collaboration among academic experts and leading community college professionals, while granting participants exclusive access to the most inventive and thought-provoking programs from around the world.

Conference on Quality in Higher Education
115th Annual Meeting of NCA / The Higher Learning Commission
The Higher Learning Commission
Chicago, IL 60602
April 9-13, 2010
http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=166&Itemid=155

Don’t miss this chance to participate in one of the largest and most diverse higher education conferences of the year! The Higher Learning Commission seeks innovative, engaging proposals on a variety of topics for its 2010 Annual Meeting program.
Recent STLCC Assessment Publications


Important STLCC Assessment Links

- Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment Toolbox http://collegeweb.stlcc.edu/assessment/
- Assessment Resources http://www.stlcc.edu/Faculty_and_Staff_Resources/Assessment/Assessment_Resources.html
- Assessment Public Site http://www.stlcc.edu/Faculty_and_Staff_Resources/Assessment/