Student Learning Assessment:

The Challenge is Often Not What it (first) Seems
From Experiences at a Connecticut Community College

Contribution to CCC System Conference:
Success 2.0: Enhancing Student Learning and Retention with Technology
Connecticut Community Colleges, Middlesex Community College
Oct. 29 2010 By: Dr. Brian Donohue Lynch, Quinebaug Valley Community College
Learning Assessment: Not (just) a matter of

• Finding the right techniques,
• methods,
• standards,
• ‘evidence’
Learning Assessment: Calls For Coherence

• The need for a consistent, systemic, long-view approach to assessment
Learning Assessment: Calls For Coherence

• Within which
  • techniques,
  • methods,
  • standards, and
  • resulting ‘evidence’
• make sense (for teaching and learning)
Learning Assessment: The Need For Coherence

• This coherence should be defined and exist in interconnected spheres, of: courses, disciplines, curriculum, programs, and degrees
Programs, Degrees & Certificates

Disciplines

Courses
Learning Assessment:
The Need For Coherence

• We cannot produce or maintain this coherence uniquely at any one point (one course, one department, one program, one institution)
Learning Assessment:
The Need For Coherence

• Such spheres extend beyond our individual institutions—across and between disciplines, across and between ‘systems’ of education
But:

*The Drivers of Diversion*

• Higher Education institutions, however, seem prone to the equivalent of *institutional AADD*.*

*Assessment Attention Deficit Disorder*
But:

**The Drivers of Diversion**

- Pursuing academic trends and approaches that too often leave participants (faculty and administrators alike) feeling they have been the perennial victims of a “flavor of the month” syndrome in institutional change.
But:

The Drivers of Diversion

• Treating what could be significant elements of an effective systemic approach to assessment,
• ...instead as discrete, disconnected fads that come and go
The Drivers of Diversion

Student Success

Learning Outcomes

Rubrics

Learning Competencies

Cycles of Administration

Grass-roots Resistance

"Culture of Evidence"

Curriculum Mapping

Learning Standards

Learning Outcomes Management Systems

Classroom Assessment Techniques

Top-Down Decision Making

Program Assessment

Completion Rates

Student Retention
The Drivers of Diversion

A Systems Understanding

Rubrics
Student Success
Learning Outcomes
Learning Competencies
Cycles of Administration
“Culture of Evidence”
Grass-roots Resistance
ePortfolios
Curriculum Mapping
Learning Outcomes Management Systems
Learning Standards
Classroom Assessment Techniques
Top-Down Decision Making
Student Retention
Program Assessment
Completion Rates

Understanding
At Quinebaug Valley Community College

• Definition of learning outcomes (Gen. Ed. and Others) (1998; revised, 2007-08)
• Mapped to the curriculum (1998; revised 2008)
• Dialogues in and across disciplines (NEEAN; TYCA;NAEYC;ASA;APA)
• Dialogues between institutions (about 8 out of 12 so far in the CCC System)
• IISL Consortium (Alverno/Lumina) : 2007-2009 Including 42 community colleges from across US
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• At least 4 different “clusters” of practice
• Aiming to develop college-wide practice
• Aiming to develop inter-college collaboration
  • For *Standards*
  • And *Practice*
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• Four key examples
  • Fine Arts
  • Writing (across the curriculum)
  • Early Childhood Education
  • Medical Assisting

• And extending the models to
  • Further courses,
  • Further disciplines
  • Further programs
At Quinebaug Valley Community College

• Four key examples
  • Fine Arts: Mark Szantyr, Coordinator of Fine Arts Program
  • Writing (across the curriculum*): Brian Kaufman, English/Writing
  • Early Childhood Education: Sue Spencer, Coordinator of ECE Program; assisted by Cynthia Shirshac
  • Medical Assisting: Cheri Goretti
“There is no one best way to assess institutional effectiveness, and the Commission prescribes no formula that an institution must use for measuring or demonstrating its effectiveness. Assessment efforts will vary among different types of institutions as well as among institutions of the same type. Successful assessment efforts are compatible with the institution's mission and its available resources.”
“Assessment is not a one-time activity; rather, it is evolutionary, ongoing, and incremental. The Commission... however ...expects that in due time [an institution’s] assessment efforts will be more comprehensive, systematic, integrative, and organic.”
“Regardless of their scope, these efforts will be both qualitative and quantitative. Assessment does not require standardized or even professionally developed instruments or complicated methods of statistical analysis.”
(from the NEASC/CIHE Statement on Institutional Effectiveness,)
• Cultivating a Culture
• of Evidence and Assessment

Web 2.0 and Beyond!