Three Steps to Assessment
**by Dr. Julie Weissman, Assistant Provost
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Have you ever:
- changed the sequence of your course material?
- decided to do less lecturing and more group work with your students?
- asked your students to do more frequent shorter papers rather than one or two longer papers?

Have you made these changes so that students could learn better?

If so, you've been doing assessment.

Assessment is simply one of many tools that faculty can use to improve the academic experience for students.

Doing assessment means addressing three questions.

1. What should your students know or be able to do at the end of your course that they didn't know or couldn't do at the beginning?

2. What do your students have to do to convince you that they are where you want them to be at the end of your course?

3. How will you use assessment results to improve your course?

How can we address these three questions?

1. What should your students know or be able to do at the end of your course that they didn't know or couldn't do at the beginning?

Before we assess student learning, we need to define what it is we are assessing. After all, we can't measure what we haven't defined. Defining what students should know or be able to do at the end places the focus on student learning rather than on how much the instructor needs to

cover (e.g. five chapters in the textbook). Identifying and communicating expected outcomes to students lets them know what is expected of them.

The five dimensions of the SLU experience were developed to offer faculty a framework for determining student outcomes. The five dimensions flow from the mission, are broad enough to encompass the diversity of SLU's undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, and provide a context for faculty to develop relevant and measurable student outcomes. The dimensions describe our expectations for students as they progress through SLU's academic programs.

(See page 3 for the Five Dimensions in detail)

Some examples of student outcomes for the each of the dimensions are as follows. These outcomes were identified by SLU schools and colleges for undergraduate core courses taught by faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences. Each of the outcomes illustrates what students should be able to do by the end of a course.

Scholarship and Knowledge
Sociology: Analyze processes of positive and negative social change.

Intellectual Inquiry and Communication
Communications: Display oral presentation skills that engage the audience in the material.
Chemistry: Apply scientific reasoning to solve problems.

Community Building
History: Demonstrate the influence of other cultures and historical forces on current American culture.

Leadership and Service
English: Integrate personal, reasoned opinions with readings and research in order to produce coherent, persuasive essays.
Fine and Performing Arts: Describe the meaning of an art form as it relates to the human condition.

Spirituality and Values
Philosophy: Defend a position on an ethical issue using an ethical decision-making model and articulate the supporting rationale.

Have your perspectives of the English language changed as a result of having learned German? Gregory also administers an assessment instrument at mid-semester so that he can adjust the second half of his courses to address issues and themes that might not have been planned or anticipated.

Embedded questions can be used to assess student learning as well. To use embedded questions, faculty teaching the same course agree to use a common set of questions as part of their exams and to rubrics designed to measure the desired outcomes. The students' responses to these embedded questions are then analyzed across the sections of the course to determine if the students are achieving the overall course objectives. While course embedded assessment takes upfront time to identify the concepts to be measured, the questions to be asked, and the rubrics to be used for the analysis of responses, this is one of the least intrusive methods of assessment. It allows faculty to gather information for course improvement without requiring students to engage in further assessment-related activities.

3. How will you use assessment results to improve your course?

While assessment of individual student learning is necessary to assign grades, the value of assessment is the evidence it provides to improve a course which, in turn, improves student learning. This is key to why we need to do ongoing faculty-designed assessment. Gregory Wolf says that the value of doing assessment is that it allows instructors to be flexible. However, he cautions that assessment is "only beneficial if we act on our results. We can be told something a thousand times, but unless we are willing to change, then we just have useless information."

An important component in the assessment process is to document changes made especially in courses and programs of study based on the results of assessment. This type of documentation allows the University to provide solid evidence of improvements and the rationale for improvements to external, on be documen8j0 -s5tn8i46.060J0 41c

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National Education Association Democracy in Higher Education Prize

The National Education Association will award the Democracy in Higher Education Prize for an article that contributes to the expansion of the welcoming and democractic culture of higher learning and the ideals of tolerance, justice, and the unfettered pursuit of truth traditional to the academy.

Sponsor: National Education Association (NEA) Excellence in the Academy Awards

Deadline: September 30, 2003

Amount: $2,500 - Along with receiving the award of $2,500, the winning entries will be published in *Thought and Action*, the NEA higher education journal. Winners will also be asked to be presenters at the NEA Higher Education Conference.

For more information, see http://www.nea.org/he/ajeaward.html.

Computer Science & Engineering Undergraduate Teaching Award

The Computer Science and Engineering Undergraduate Teaching Award is given for outstanding contributions to undergraduate education through both teaching and service and for helping to maintain interest, increase the visibility of the Computer Society, and make a statement about the importance with which the society views undergraduate education.

Sponsor: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Foundation , IEEE Computer Society Education Awards

Deadline: October 1, 2003

Amount: $2,000

For more information, see http://www.computer.org/awards.

For more grant and funding opportunites, check this website:
http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/

National Council for the Social Studies FASSE Demonstration Projects Grant

This award will be made once every two to three years, beginning in 2000. The purpose of the Fund for the Advancement of Social Studies Education (FASSE) is to support projects for the improvement of social studies education, where social studies is defined as the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. The fund was established to respond to a perceived need for resource

2002-2003 CTE Steering Committee Reports

Technology Committee

Technology and Assessment

Pairing the words technology and assessment in a heading for a column such as this immediately prompts a question. Will this column address assessing the impact of technology on learning, or, will it focus on using technology as a tool to assess learning? The theme of this newsletter, assessing learning, relates to the second part of the question. However, before turning my attention to that focus, let me mention a couple of resources for individuals interested in the first part of the question, assessing the impact of technology on learning. The article "Asking the Right Question: What does re

The Technology Corner (continued)

Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) is another online resource. This free survey tool which can be used to gather feedback from students about how the course elements are helping them to learn is available online at http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/salgains/instructor/default.asp.

Finally, one form of assessment that has been gaining great popularity lately is the portfolio. In particular, electronic portfolios have gained much attention lately. The Center and ITS will be offering a series this summer that will focus on creating electronic portfolios. More information on the series will be available shortly. If you are interested in exploring electronic portfolios for assessment, an excellent resource is a website maintained by Helen Barrett from the University of Alaska at http://electronicportfolios.com/portfolios/bookmarks.html.

NEW JOURNAL

The *Journal of Student Centered Learning (JSCL)* is a new journal containing practical and research articles. If you are interested in this new journal or are interested in submitting a manuscript for publication, please view the authors guidelines which are available at http://www.newforums.com/news_jccauthor.htm. Subscription information is available at http:/newforums.com. For questions about the journal and/or publishing, please contact the editor, Ted Panitz, at tpanitz@capecod.net.

Pictured at right: Dr. Jim Groccia from the University of Missouri, Columbia teaches faculty to juggle at CTE's Academic Portfolio Retreat held at Cedar Creek Conference Center in March 2003.

Assessment Resources in the Faculty Resource Room

The CTE Faculty Resource Room provides a casual, flexible space for faculty to browse CTE collections and exchange ideas about teaching. Along with a computer station and comfortable reading chairs, this room contains our expanding print resources and houses our videotape library along with a television and VCR. These resources cover a wide range of topics related to teaching. The room also has a conference table and chairs, providing an excellent site for small discussion groups or brown-bag lunches. Visit the CTE website: www.slu.edu/centers/cte to view the on-line resource room schedule. Walk-ins are welcome during our "open hours." The CTE Resource Room is also available for small faculty discussion groups by contacting the main CTE office in Verhaegen 314, (phone 977-3944; email tebbebc@slu.edu).

Video Cassettes:

- "Are We Testing What We Are Teaching: Constructing Accurate and Useful Tests" (teleconference March 7, 2002)
- "Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching"
- "Teaching and Assessing for Critical Thinking and Deep Learning"

Books:
- *Classroom Assessment Techniques*, Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross
- *Evaluation to Improve Learning,* Benjamin S. Bloom, George F. Madaus, J. Thomas Hastings
- *Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching,* Peter Seldin

Articles:
"Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire" William McKeachie
"Development and Testing of a Core Set of University-Wide Teaching Effectiveness Items"
"The Dimensionality of Ratings and Their Use in Personnel Decisions" Philip C. Abrami, Sylvia d'Apollonia
"Course Characteristics and College Students' Ratings of Their Teachers: What We Know and What We Don't," Kenneth Feldman
"Getting Beyond Exhaustion: Reflection, Self-Assessment, and Learning," Kathleen Blake Yancey
"Steps in a Faculty Evaluation System"
"Developing an Effective Faculty Evaluation System," William E. Cashin
"Grading Inquiry Projects," Beverly Busching

CTE has back issues of *Assessment Update: Progress, Trends, and Practices in Higher Education* available in the Resource Room.

May 29-30, 2003
TECHNOLOGY: THE SERVANT OF
LEARNING. The Kaneb Center for Teaching
and Learning, at the University of Notre Dame,
is offering a two-day workshop entitled,
TEACHING WELL USING TECH-
NOLOGY, A Faculty Member's Guide to Wise
and Time-Efficient Use of Instructional Tech-
nology ,Thursday and Friday, May 29-30, 2003
at the Notre Dame Room, LaFortune Center on
the Notre Dame campus. For more information,
visit http://twut.nd.edu.
This workshop, underwritten by a grant from
the AT&T Foundation, is a faculty member's
guide to wise and time-efficient use of instruc-

Another Successful Faculty Academic Portfolio Retreat

The sixth annual Faculty Portfolio Retreat sponsored by the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence was held March 21 and 22, 2003 at the Cedar Creek Conference Center in New Haven, Missouri. The workshop directors, Drs. James Groccia and Marilyn Miller from the University of Missouri, Columbia led a group of fifteen new faculty members to develop strategies for documenting good teaching and teaching improvement in preparation for the promotion and tenure review process. The retreat provided faculty with an opportunity to come together across disciplines as a teaching community for conversation and peer mentoring. The participants enjoyed good food and great company, but worked very hard, leaving the retreat with an initial draft of an academic portfolio.

Portfolio Retreat Participants pictured above: Anna Biggs, Bonnie Tebbe, Katherine MacKinnon, Gretchen Arnold, Gretchen Salsich, Jim Groccia, Marilyn Miller, Wendy Love Anderson, Darcy Scharff, Joanne Langan,

When I decided to attend the
Faculty Portfolio Development

Find us and this newsletter on the Web at http://www.slu.edu/centers/cte/ or call (314)977-3944

CTE Notebook Designed and Published by the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence staff. Please contact Lori Hunt, *Notebook* editor, if you have any comments, suggestions or questions, 4,eodo if7(Sp