

Assessment Best Practices

Executive Summary

During the months of December 2018, January 2019, and February 2019 representatives of the Ohio Faculty Council were asked a series of three questions related to assessment of student learning:

- 1) Please provide a one or two sentence description for each of the three most important pedagogical improvements that have occurred at your institution as a result of assessments of learning outcomes,
- 2) What data and/or assessment practices led to these improvements, and what evidence indicates that these improvements have led to better educational outcomes, and
- 3) What steps does your institution take to ensure that important educational outcomes are not neglected because they are difficult to measure?

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) includes ongoing assessment of student learning as a criterion for accreditation (4.B)¹ and lists curriculum maps, and learning outcomes and rubrics, among the examples of how this can be documented. HLC implies that mapping learning outcomes in the curriculum and measuring with rubrics are effective ways to improve educational achievement. Critics of assessment provide a variety of reasons why this may not be true ranging from Eric Gilbert's (2018)² contention that faculty do not have the training or resources to generate good assessment data, to Michael Bennett and Jacqueline Brady's (2014)³ claim that assessment leads educators away from important elements of education.

Recognizing the substantial investment of resources associated with assessment, the Ohio Faculty Council (OFC) is interested in both examining the efficacy of assessment efforts and in identifying best practices by public institutions of higher education in Ohio. As such, it should be understood that answers indicating that assessment has not led to improvements were acceptable. For example, if there were fewer than three examples of pedagogical improvements that can be traced to assessment of learning outcomes, institutions were encouraged to provide us as many examples as they have (and, if there were no examples, to simply indicate that none were available).

¹ 4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

² Gilbert, E. (2018) An Insider's Take On Assessment: It may be worse than you thought, The Chronicle of Higher Education.

³ Bennett, M. & Brady, J. (2014) A Radical Critique of the Learning Outcomes Assessment Movement, Radical Teacher (100).

Summaries of institution-specific answers to questions about wait list policies and practices:

Akron

Bowling Green

Central State

Cleveland State

Kent State

Miami

Ohio State

Ohio University

Shawnee State

University of Cincinnati

University of Toledo

Wright State

Youngstown State