Assessment of Student Learning at PPCC: A Department-Centric Approach to Continuous Quality Improvement

Q&A

What is assessment of student learning?
1. Deciding what we want our students to learn upon completing a given course or program
2. Making sure students have multiple opportunities to learn and practice key learning outcomes
3. Asking students to demonstrate what they have learned through course-embedded assignments
4. Evaluating the extent to which students have achieved the desired learning outcomes
5. Using assessment results to confirm or improve student learning (“closing the loop”) 
6. Documenting and communicating results, conclusions, and next steps on an annual basis

Why do we assess student learning?
- To confirm or improve student learning and educational quality. Assessment results help answer the following questions “Are students learning what we want them to learn?” and “Is there a way we can promote better learning?”
- To meet the requirements of our regional and specialized accrediting agencies.
- Our regional accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, requires that we demonstrate a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning (Core Component 4B).

Who is in charge of student learning assessment?
- Assessment of student learning is a collective responsibility. Broad involvement from instructional staff and administrators is required.
- Assessment is an integral part of instruction. Faculty and instructors play a key role in this process. They are responsible for measuring students’ abilities to achieve desired learning outcomes and demonstrating how assessment results are being used to confirm or improve student learning.
- Department Assessment Teams, led by faculty or Department Chairs, are responsible for guiding the assessment process within their respective discipline/program. This includes ensuring that assessment strategies adhere to best practices and making sure that these strategies are implemented with fidelity by all faculty/instructors involved.
- Administrative leaders (Associate Deans, Deans, Vice President of Instructional Services, and PPCC President) promote and support assessment efforts by i) reinforcing the importance of student learning assessment as a means to improve student learning and fulfill accreditation requirements, and ii) ensuring that departments have the resources they need to develop and implement effective assessment strategies.
- The Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness works closely with instructional staff and administrators to facilitate the development, implementation, and monitoring of assessment activities.
The Assessment Committee facilitates and supports the development and implementation of meaningful, data-informed, and interconnected assessment processes across the four academic divisions of the college. PPCC’s non-instructional departments (e.g. Academic Advising, New Student Orientation, Learning Assistance Centers) assess what students learn as a result of participating in co-curricular activities or utilizing support services. Through training and consultation services, the Committee for Assessment in Student Services (CASS) assists those departments in articulating meaningful and measurable outcomes, deploying effective assessment strategies, and interpreting, reporting, and using assessment results.

Who will see my assessment documents?
- Other faculty and instructors in your department as well as your Dean and Associate Dean
- Other faculty, instructors, and administrators at the college
- PPCC’s Assessment Committee members
- HLC Reviewers (note: our next review is scheduled in AY18/19)

Where will my assessment documents be stored?
- In D2L (Content area) (an Assessment shell has been created for each academic division)
- In the Evidence File of the HLC online Assurance System. Your assessment documents will provide evidence that PPCC “demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning” (Core Component 4B).

When do I need to submit my assessment documents? (see next page)
- If your department plans to collect assessment data in the fall semester (Group A), your plan is due to your Dean and Associate Dean by September 15th. Your report is due by March 25th.
- If your department plans to collect assessment data in the spring semester (Group B), your plan is due to your Dean and Associate by February 15th. Your report is due by November 15th.
- If your department plans to collect assessment data in both semesters (Group C), your plan is due to your Dean and Associate Dean by September 15th. Your report is also due by September 15th.

Who should I contact to receive additional information about student learning assessment?
- Your Department Assessment Team members
- Your department’s Assessment Coaches
- Your Department Chair, Associate Dean, or Dean
- Dr. Patricia Diawara, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, 719-502-2037 or Patricia.Diawara@ppcc.eu
### Group A: Assessment results collected in the fall semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Identify learning outcomes(s), identify assessment method, instrument and scoring tool, develop timeline of activities, identify who will be involved (course sections, faculty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do</td>
<td>Provide learning opportunities to student, ask student to demonstrate learning (embedded assignment, direct evidence whenever possible), score/grade student work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Analyze data (= identify where students exceed/meet expectations and where they fall below expectations), share results within department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>Research and identify strategies to improve student learning, explain what changes will be made and how learning will be assessed.</td>
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#### Timeframe
- **Plan:** Start date: Spring/Summer, Due date: **September 15th**
- **Do:** Fall semester
- **Study:** January – March 25th
- **Act:** Assessment Report

### Group B: Assessment results collected in the spring semester

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#### Timeframe
- **Plan:** Start date: Summer/Fall, Due date: **February 15th**
- **Do:** Spring semester
- **Study:** Summer/Fall - **November 15th**
- **Act:** Assessment Report

### Group C: Assessment results collected in the both semesters

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#### Timeframe
- **Plan:** Start date: Summer/Fall, Due date: **February 15th**
- **Do:** Fall semester + Spring semester
- **Study:** Summer/Fall - **September 15th**
- **Act:** Assessment Report