

Program Review and Assessment Committee
March 11, 2011, 2:00 – 3: 30 p.m., UL 1126
Minutes

Present: K. Alfrey (Chair), P. Altenburger, E. Ardemagni, T. Banta, R. Bennett, K. Black, S. Brand, M. Brown, C. Fitzpatrick, M. Hansen, K. Hart, B. Hayes, L. Houser, M. Irwin, S. Kahn, J. Lee, A. Martin, L. McGuire, H. Mzumara, J. Paine, G. Pike, S. Rice, I. Ritchie, S. Scott, J. Singh, K. Steinberg, R. Vertner, K. Wendeln, M. Yard (Vice-Chair), N. Young

1. February Meeting Minutes: approved with one editorial correction

2. Updates

- Annual Reports
 - o K. Alfrey reminded members that annual reports will be due in late May. The report review subcommittee will meet shortly after spring break to provide feedback before this year's reports are due.
 - o S. Kahn and S. Scott commented on the 2009-10 assessment report final draft, circulated prior to this meeting and based on PRAC reports.
- 2012 Committee (T. Banta)
 - o The next issue of the newsletter will be circulated shortly.
 - o The Faculty Council Academic Affairs Committee has explored how to increase faculty engagement with the PULs, including a number of preliminary recommendations. T. Banta suggested that a future PRAC agenda might set aside time for small group discussion of these ideas.
 - o The consensus was that it might be well to send a reminder to deans about the approaching due-date for program student learning outcomes. M. Yard announced that SLOs have been completed for all science programs, and he circulated a copy for interested PRAC members' review.
- Success stories (K. Hart)
 - o K. Hart described how the radiology program structures its goals in alignment with the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography.
 - o Faculty annually review all the goals and assessment results to determine what changes may be needed. IU students perform above national averages, but she gave examples of improvements made in response to student feedback.
- Direct and Indirect Assessment Measures (M. Hansen)
 - o M. Hansen gave a quick refresher tutorial about the comparative benefits and drawbacks of direct vs. indirect forms of assessment.
 - o She emphasized the value of using several different types of assessment, including both direct and indirect forms, in assessment of student learning.
 - o Copies of the presentation handout are appended below.

3. Institutional Review Board and Student Data (S. Brand)

- Sara Brand (Associate Director, IU Human Subjects Office—Social Science, Behavioral, and Educational Research) first explained the new IRB organizational structure

combining expertise from Indianapolis and Bloomington IU campuses. Though staff may be based at one campus or another, they travel frequently to be available for consultations.

- The intersection of human-subjects research and learning assessment is often confusing. Quality-improvement evaluation is generally internally focused, but assessment data are often reported externally for publication or conference presentations and thus become susceptible to oversight. FERPA concerns with student educational records and personally identifiable information also complicate determinations. IRB becomes interested with the use of student data for research that will be published or presented beyond the institution.
- Even for studies determined to be exempt, IRB may require informed consent for study participants. The definition of “research” according to IU IRB is “If BOTH of the following are true, your activity involves research: 1) The activity is a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, and 2) The activity is designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.” There was brief discussion of the issues of potential “coerciveness.” Instructors or faculty members may ensure that students in their courses feel voluntary consent to research by having data collected by a third party or collecting data and consent only after grades have been recorded.
- Brand’s slides are circulated separately for committee members’ reference.

4. Principles of Graduate Learning: tabled until next meeting

5. Using ePortfolio in SLIS (M. Irwin)

- M. Irwin described the rationale for selecting ePortfolio for review of its MLS program as based in two needs: the American Library Association emphasizes assessment of student learning outcomes, and the school had relied primarily on indirect assessment methods, and the Indianapolis program includes a large number of distance students who would be unable to come to campus for some types of direct assessment.
- The program uses a matrix structured according to the MLS program goals, with students selecting items of their work as evidence of their having accomplished each goal. The system worked well in its pilot year, and the Bloomington SLIS faculty have agreed that Indianapolis faculty can proceed independently with this methodology. Faculty are now determining how often to review the data, using periodic random samples of each goal. They may also bring in practitioners to assist with the evaluation.

6. Announcements

- K. Alfrey reminded members that the deadline for session proposals for the Assessment Institute is March 18.

7. Adjournment at 3:35 p.m.

Minutes recorded by S. Scott and respectfully submitted by M. Yard, Vice Chair

APPENDIX

Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning – Michele Hansen

Direct Measures

Definition: Direct measures require students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. They provide tangible, visible and self-explanatory evidence of what students have and have not learned as a result of a course, program, or activity (Suskie, 2004, 2009; Palomba and Banta, 1999). Actual student behavior or work is measured or assessed.

Examples: Exams/Tests, Quizzes, Papers, Oral Presentations, Group Work, Assignments, Exit Exams, Standardized tests.

Direct Measures		
Types	Advantages	Disadvantages
Authentic Course-Embedded: Exams/Tests, Quizzes, Papers, Oral Presentations, Group Work, Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require higher-order cognitive skills and problem solving. - Direct measures are most effective if they are also course-embedded which means the work done by the student is actually work that counts towards a grade. - Student takes the activity more seriously if associated with grade. - Authentic and part of already existing faculty and student work (not add-on assessment). - Easier to make part of a “culture of evidence”. - Increasingly the mandate from accrediting agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time consuming to develop standardized criteria for evaluating (e.g., rubrics). - Can be difficult to collect and aggregate for a large, public institution.
Electronic Portfolios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective mechanism for collecting and storing student work (authentic direct measures). - Allows multiple formats (e.g., paper, video, audio). - Allows students to reflect on their learning experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time consuming to develop standardized criteria for evaluating (e.g., rubrics). - Can be difficult to collect and aggregate for a large, public institution. - Technology can be difficult to develop, use, and navigate.
Locally Developed Exit Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Match local goals. - Aligned with curriculum. - Faculty-developed. - Development and scoring processes are informative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult to develop valid instruments. - Time consuming to develop.
Commercial Standardized Tests (e.g., Collegiate Learning Assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low time investment. - National norms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expensive. - May not match specific program goals

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students may not be motivated to perform at best ability levels and this can negatively affect reliability and validity. -May measure “generalized intelligence” which may not change due to curriculum or classroom experiences.
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Indirect Measures

Definition: Assessments that measure opinions or thoughts about students' or alumni's own knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning experiences, perception of services received or employers' opinions. While these types of measures are important and necessary they do not measure students' performance directly. They supplement direct measures of learning by providing information about how and why learning is occurring.

Examples: self-assessment, peer-feedback, surveys, end-of-course evaluations, questionnaires, focus groups, or exit interviews, and other activities that gather impressions or opinions about the program and/or its learning goals. Other examples: graduation rates; retention and transfer studies; graduate follow-up studies; success of students in subsequent institutional settings; and job placement data.

Indirect Measures		
Types	Advantages	Disadvantages
Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inexpensive. -Relatively easy to aggregate and collect - Available for almost all students. - Good indicator of academic success and progress toward degree. - Can be good proxy for student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not standardized. -Not ideal measure for determining students’ actual knowledge, skills, and abilities. -Grades alone do not indicate if students are able to write well, think critically, problem solve, and apply values and ethics.
Surveys and/or questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inexpensive. -Understand issues that are difficult to observe systematically. - Critical to understand what individuals perceive, know, and think of programs and services. -Acknowledges importance of student (or alumni), faculty, and staff opinions - Can help understand students’ perceptions of learning experiences -Students can offer suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not a direct measure of learning. -Difficult to develop valid instruments. -Low response rates for large sample, web-based surveys. -Do not involve higher order cognitive processes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for improvement. -Can provide information about how and why learning is occurring. - Statistical relationships, prediction control, description, hypothesis testing. - Precise, numerical. 	
Interviews (e.g., senior exit interviews)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Comprehensive, holistic, richly descriptive. -Provides in-depth information about students' learning experiences. -Allows individualization and follow-up probes. -May develop positive interactions with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -May be intimidating, biasing results. -Time-consuming to conduct and analyze data. -May not be representative.
Focus group interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Same as interviews. -Allows more students to be "interviewed" in less time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Same as interviews. -A few students can skew the results if not carefully facilitated.

References

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- Walvoord, B.E. (2004). *Assessment clear and simple: A practical guide for institutions, departments, and general education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Wilson, M. & Sloane, K. (2000). From principles to practice: an embedded assessment system. *Applied Measurement In Education*, 13(2), 181–208.
- Tables adapted from Central Michigan University. (2002). Tools for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes and Minnesota State University, Mankato Academic Affairs (2002).retrieved from March 7, 2011 <http://www.mnsu.edu/student/assessment/methods.html>.