

## **Academic Outcomes Assessment**

### **Basic Assessment Types**

#### **Classroom Assessment.**

Classroom assessment describes the informal techniques that instructors use in their individual classrooms to decide whether or not the students are actually learning what they are teaching. The best teachers realize that just because they feel that they have “covered the material” in 50 minutes, does not necessarily mean that the students have learned, or understood, concepts well enough to complete an assignment on their own. Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATS), many of which were designed by Patricia Cross and Tom Angelo in the 1990’s, include the one-minute paper, think-pair-share, ....

Classroom Assessment Techniques are usually short, non-graded, and anonymous. They can be implemented either at the beginning or at the end of the class period. Ideally, the instructor will use the results to prepare for the following class period. They also may serve as a basis for group work or projects directed towards the topic/concept being discussed.

#### **Program/Departmental Assessment.**

Program assessment describes work that a department does to determine the effectiveness of one of its programs or, in the case of a small, specialized department, of the department in general. For example, the English Department may be interested in analyzing the success of its developmental writing courses. What percentage of students completing the developmental sequence succeed in Eng 101? How are students exited out of the developmental sequence? Is there a common, departmental final exam? Is there a final writing assignment graded by a common, departmental rubric? What steps can be taken to improve the effectiveness of the developmental courses?

Answers to questions like this lead to alternate strategies and revised departmental policies, aimed at improving the developmental program. Program assessment should be a team effort and should focus on one, specific part of a large department. The assessment cycle will take several years to complete, and should include planning, assessing and data collection, analysis of data, and finally, closing the loop. This implies using the analysis for the purpose of revising/improving the teaching and learning process.

#### **General Education Assessment.**

Assessment of general education describes a college-wide effort to infuse general education objectives into all courses, and to assess the extent to which students are learning them. Will a 2-year course of study at your college produce graduates who can communicate effectively, think critically, and research appropriately? These are some of the general education objectives that many colleges have in common. Assessment tools are available for purchase (standardized gen ed exams) OR instruments can be created in-house. Surveys and other indirect measure are often used to assess general education.