Assessing Graduate Student Theses/Dissertations for Program Improvement
Workshop Evaluation Report

Executive Summary:
The Assessing Graduate Student Theses/Dissertations for Program Improvement workshop was held on October 13, 2015 and facilitated by Yao Hill. One session was offered in the morning and the repeat session in the afternoon. Advertised as a beginning-level, presentation and interactive session, the workshop was designed to guide faculty through considerations and strategies on how to utilize theses/dissertation work for program student learning outcome assessment and improvement.

13 participants attended the workshop and 8 completed and submitted an evaluation survey (62% response rate). All respondents found the workshop useful (100%) and 63% reported it as being effective in increasing their understanding using graduate student theses/dissertation work and work-in-progress as evidence of student learning for program assessment.

1. State the SLO(s) that was Assessed, Targeted, or Studied

Using an evaluation form, evidence was collected on the extent to which participants achieved three learning outcomes: Participants will

1. be able to align faculty expectations of the thesis/dissertation work and work-in-progress with program learning outcomes.
2. leave with a draft rubric to evaluate the quality of thesis/dissertation/defense aligned with program learning outcomes.
3. be able to develop strategies to use the assessment results for program improvement.

The extent of the perceived usefulness and effectiveness of the workshop in relation to the workshop outcomes, as well as aspects of the workshop that were most and least valuable was also assessed.

2. State the Type(s) of Evidence Gathered

The facilitator distributed a paper evaluation form with two workshop outcomes-related questions and five evaluation questions.

3. State How Many Pieces of Evidence Were Collected

Out of the 13 who attended the workshop, 8 completed and submitted an evaluation survey (62% response rate).
4. **State How the Evidence was Interpreted, Evaluated, or Analyzed**

The workshop facilitator used descriptive statistics to summarize the results and identified themes from a close reading of the open-ended responses (i.e., the valuable/least valuable aspects and other constructive comments.)

5. **Summarize the Actual Results**

All but one of the respondents (88%) reported being able to draft a rubric or refine an existing rubric to assess a culminating graduate student product (e.g., defense, thesis, dissertation). 88% of respondents (8 out of 9) learned strategies to use assessment processes or results as a result of the workshop when its applicable to them.

**Workshop Participant Evaluation results**

- 100% said the workshop was ‘Useful’ or ‘Very Useful.’
- 63% said the workshop was ‘Effective’ or ‘Very Effective.’ Three respondents (38%) reported it was ‘Somewhat Effective’.
- Overall, respondents commented positively on the example rubrics shared during the workshop.

Detailed results are presented in Appendix A.

6. **In addition to the actual results, were there additional conclusions or discoveries?**

No.

7. **Use of Results/Program Modifications:**

The respondents were generally pleased with the resources (i.e., example rubrics) and thus, future workshops will continue to utilize examples. One respondent mentioned that the exercise was not clear enough and that the rubric examples could not be downloaded. Another respondent suggested that the presentation be shortened so as to not go over the time limit. For future workshops, the facilitator might consider writing/presenting clearer instructions for the exercise, providing hardcopies of the example rubrics (so participants do not have to download them), and reducing the number of PowerPoint slides for the presentation to allow more time for the rubric modification activity and discussion.

8. **Reflect on the Assessment Process**

The combination of direct assessment and participants’ perceptions seem to work well.

9. **Other Important Information.**

None.
Appendix A. Responses to Open- and Closed-Ended Questions

Stem: Overall usefulness of the workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Item</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Useful</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Little Use</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Useful At All</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stem: Workshop effectiveness in increasing understanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Item</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Effective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Effective</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Most valuable aspect of the workshop**
- Resources/Preparation
- Q&A
- Rethinking Rubrics for thesis/dissertation
- Gained an understanding about process that the faculty have to go through to develop the rubric and the challenges that faculty face in evaluating students
- Providing examples of rubrics

**Least valuable aspect of the workshop**
- None
- None
- None
- The exercise. It wasn’t clear what we were supposed to do, and the examples we were supposed to modify could not be downloaded.

**Other constructive comments**
- None
- Thank You!
- Thank you! The program (nursing) that I work with is already doing this
• The workshop went over the time limit, so reduce the # of points/slides to focus more on the critical points