Assessment Planning for Busy People
*a workshop on program learning outcomes assessment*

by Monica Stitt-Bergh

A key to meaningful program assessment of student learning is a feasible plan. In this workshop, the facilitator (Monica) will describe elements of a feasible plan, provides tips and strategies, and attendees will spend time creating a plan for their program.

Workshop outcomes:
You will leave with a plan to move assessment forward in your program.
You will be able to describe how program assessment of learning outcomes relates to Program Review and Institutional Learning Objectives.

**Level:** Basic knowledge recommended (e.g., learning outcomes, curriculum map)

**Format:** Hands-on

**Date/time/location:** Monday, October 26, 2015, 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm, KUY 106

Slide 1
Slide 2

Workshop Outcomes

• You will be able to describe how program learning assessment relates to Program Review and Institutional Learning Objectives.

• You will leave with a plan to move assessment forward in your program.

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Agenda

1. Very brief assessment overview
2. Elements of a feasible plan
3. Activity #1: Examples
4. Program – Program Review/Institution connection
5. Activity #2: Design your plan
6. Wrap-up and workshop evaluation
The Assessment Office is here to help faculty improve student learning through assessment – its tools and processes. We also work with co-curricular and academic support programs to help them use assessment for program improvement.
The assessment process is a cycle that starts with the program’s desired outcomes for students; providing students with opportunities to learn (course assignments, out-of-class experiences) and documenting those in a curriculum map; collecting evidence of student learning (via student writing, oral presentation, exams, etc.); evaluating and interpreting the evidence (e.g., using a rubric to score student work); and using the results to guide program decision making aimed at program improvement.

It’s important to never forget the purpose: strengthen your program for the benefit of the students.
Elements of a feasible plan

1. Use existing practices—integration saves time
   - Existing assignments
   - Department meetings
   - Annual student performance review

   What is your program already doing that you can use for program assessment?

In addition to integration with existing practices being a time saver, it usually produces meaningful evidence that faculty see as credible.

Elements of a feasible plan

2. Bundle outcomes
   - One source of evidence and/or one rubric can shed light on multiple outcomes

   Could one piece of evidence shed light on multiple outcomes?
   Could one rubric work for multiple outcomes?

Bundling outcomes and/or evidence makes assessment much more manageable and efficient.
Elements of a feasible plan

3. Purposely collect new data/evidence of learning
   • To establish a baseline
   • After a “treatment” or program change
   • If the student population changes
   • If outcome or evaluation tool (rubric) changes

   *Most programs should not collect new data every year*

   How often do you need to collect new data?

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Be intentional. Have a good reason collecting evidence—a reason that is related to students and ensuring they are prepared for their future lives in the community and workplace.

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Elements of a feasible plan

4. Use technology wisely
   • Google Forms or online survey apps like Survey Monkey
   • Google Docs
   • Google Drive
   • Excel
   • Assessment management software

   What technology could simplify collecting? Inputting? Analyzing?
There is a tendency to think new data must be collected every year but that may prevent results from being used. Instead, take a year to reflect on the results, create an action plan, and implement it.
A manageable plan limits the number of new projects

There is a tendency to think new assessment projects need to be started every year. This may also prevent use of results. So take a short break, don’t start an assessment project immediately after finishing. Avoid assessment fatigue.

Caveat: some professionally accredited programs may not have the luxury of a peaceful river and I acknowledge that. Their solution is to take turns steering and paddling to avoid fatigue.
Your Turn. Activity #1

Example #1 – Accounting capstone (undergraduate)
Example #2 – Philosophy & Critical Theory (graduate program)
Example #3 – Residence Life (co-curricular)

Please read one example and discuss with your tablemates.
Answer the Activity #1 Group Discussion Questions

In your handouts, you have three examples: 1. undergraduate; 2 graduate program; 3 co-curricular program.
On the yellow handout, you’ll see Group Discussion Questions.

Pick ONE example. Please collaborate with your tablemates to answer the questions
Program – Program Review/Institution Connection

Tip: Knowing UH requirements & objectives can save time

Knowing UH requirements can save time because the program can make sure what it’s doing will serve the program as well as the university.

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Learning Outcomes Assessment

External requirements (BOR, accreditation)

Institutional learning objectives and General Education assessment

Program Review (by college/school)

Program Assessment

During the last five years, Mānoa has taken steps to align the following: program learning outcomes assessment (and the annual assessment report), program review self-study and site visit (every 5 years), institutional learning objectives and General Education assessment and outside requirements.
Program – Institution Connection

External Requirements

Institutional Objectives

“Written Communication”

“Communicate and report”

“Competence in scholarly writing”

Program Outcomes

“Write a critical review”

Course/Experience Outcomes

Program – Program Review/Institution Connection

Examples

- You can use the Institutional Learning Objectives (graduate or undergraduate) to refine your program learning outcomes

- If you answer the annual assessment report questions, you have the required information for Program Review (every 5 years)
Your Turn. Activity #2

Questions to help you think about an assessment plan for your program

Think – Pair – Share

You may be interested in . . .

Best Practices for Planning Program-Level Assessment of Student Learning
February 2013
Assessment Office workshop

Available at http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/workshops/
Wrap up

Keep in mind:
• Manageable & feasible
• Purposeful
• Useful & meaningful

Please turn in your workshop evaluation & feedback form

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Mahalo

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Assessment Planning for Busy People Workshop

Presentation PowerPoint Outline

1. Elements of a feasible plan
   a. Use existing practices – integration saves time
      i. E.g., existing assignments, department meetings, annual student performance review
   b. Bundle outcomes
      i. E.g., use one source of evidence and/or one rubric that can shed light on multiple outcomes
   c. Purposely collect new data
      i. E.g., collect to establish a baseline; after a “treatment” or program change; if the student population changes; if outcome or evaluation tool (rubric) changes
   d. Use technology wisely
      i. To simplify collecting data, inputting data, analyzing data
      ii. Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, Google Docs, Google Drive, Excel, assessment management software
   e. A manageable plan includes time to reflect and use results
      i. Schedule time for use
      ii. Limit the number of new projects

2. Program — Program Review/institution connection
   a. Knowing UH requirements & objectives can save time
   b. External requirements > ILOs and Gen Ed assessment; Program Review > Program Assessment

3. You may be interested in Best Practices for Planning Program-Level Assessment of Student Learning (February 2013 workshop)
Activity #1: Group Discussion Questions

Please read one example, discuss with your tablemates, and answer:

1. Which of the following do you think are illustrated in the example? (check all that apply)
   - Use existing practices – integration saves time
   - Bundle outcomes
   - Purposely collect new data
   - Use technology wisely
2. What 1-3 recommendations might you give the program, knowing they are busy people?

Be ready to explain your group’s check mark(s) in question 1 and share one recommendation with the full group.

Activity #2: A plan to move assessment forward in your program

1. Which of the following might you try in your program? (check all that apply)
   - Use existing practices – integration saves time
   - Bundle outcomes
   - Purposely collect new data
   - Use technology wisely
   - Schedule time for reflection and use
   - Limit the number of new projects (prioritize)
   - Review alignment between program outcomes and institutional objectives

With your program in mind . . .

2. How often should each outcome be assessed in a five-year period? (E.g., once, twice)

3. When might the program need to collect new evidence on its outcomes?
4. Does the program have outcomes that can be “bundled”—assessed at the same time, using the same evidence and/or rubric?
   Yes    No
   Explain:

5. Does evidence already exist? E.g., as part of students’ regular coursework or existing program survey?
   Yes    No
   Explain:

6. Can the program use technology (e.g., Google Forms) to make collecting evidence, inputting results, and/or analyzing information manageable?
   Yes    No
   Explain:

7. Is there an existing venue for the program to deliver and discuss results? E.g., department forum or meeting?
   Yes    No
   Explain:

8. What’s one thing you might try next semester?

*Find a colleague and discuss your answer to Question 8.*
Assessment Planning for Busy People Workshop

Example #1: Accounting Capstone (undergraduate)
This program graduates 55-65 students per year and has 13 faculty members.

Program Learning Outcomes
1. Students demonstrate knowledge of the demand, institutional settings and use of accounting information in an international setting.
2. Student can research accounting and tax issues.
3. Students can design and evaluate controls to ensure the reliability of accounting information.

Curriculum map [excerpt]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>SLO 1 (knowledge)</th>
<th>SLO 2 (research)</th>
<th>SLO 3 (design &amp; evaluate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPA 300</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA 325</td>
<td>R</td>
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<td>CPA 345</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA 402</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA 428</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA 470 (capstone)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I: introduce; R: reinforce/practice; M: master at senior level; A: assess for program assessment

Related student products
CPA 470 (capstone)
- Four accounting and tax briefs
- One company financial report
- Two oral presentations using handouts and visual aids

Collection and evaluation of learning evidence
The two professors who teach CPA 470 grade the student assignments using the three rubrics the program collaboratively developed.

Frequency of data/evidence evaluation for program decision making
Every semester.

Results
The two professors email Excel spreadsheets with assessment results to the assessment coordinator who aggregates the results (also using Excel). They also supply the assessment coordinator with an example of a low pass and a high pass for the written assignments. The spring and fall results and examples of student work are shared with the faculty at a department meeting every February. An improvement plan is outlined, if needed.

Improvement plan
If needed, the assessment coordinator drafts the agreed upon improvement plan and distributes. The program faculty implement the plan the following semester.
Example #2: Philosophy & Critical Theory (graduate program)

This program has 20-30 students, 2-4 graduates per year, and 7 faculty members.

Program Learning Outcomes
1. Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of contemporary philosophy and critical theory at the level needed to teach undergraduate courses.
2. Become an expert in an area of specialization, demonstrated by deep content knowledge, mastery of scholarly inquiry techniques, and professional ethical practices.
3. Execute a research plan and demonstrate original contributions to the field, as shown through written and oral genres such as journal articles and conference papers and presentations.

Curriculum map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>SLO 1</th>
<th>SLO 2</th>
<th>SLO 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCT 600-620</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PCT 630-680</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Exam</td>
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<td>Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal Defense</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Dissertation Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Related student products
Coursework, comprehensive exam, proposal and dissertation, advising sessions, meetings with students, observations of teaching, the undergraduate students’ teacher evaluations

Collection and evaluation of learning evidence
The faculty collaboratively created one developmental rubric with descriptions of what a novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert know, do, and value in regards to each SLO. At the annual student performance review, the faculty use their knowledge of each student’s performance that year to discuss and evaluate each student using the rubric.

Frequency of data/evidence evaluation for program decision making
Once a year.

Results
The faculty evaluate students at the late April department meeting. The assessment coordinator summarizes the results for the May departmental meeting, including the number of students who have made improvements over the year (e.g., moved from “competent” to “proficient” on an SLO). The faculty discuss any trends and determine if results indicate program changes are needed.

Improvement plan
If needed, the assessment coordinator drafts and distributes an improvement plan which the program faculty implement.
Example #3: Residence Life (co-curricular/student affairs)
This program oversees the activities in the residence halls.

Program Student Outcomes
Residents will
1. Invest in their community
2. Know about academic resources
3. Have study skills
4. Have time management skills
5. Have stress-coping strategies for emotional wellness

Activity map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences</th>
<th>1 invest in community</th>
<th>2 acad. resources</th>
<th>3 study skills</th>
<th>4 time mgt. skills</th>
<th>5 stress-coping strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roommate success plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study skills session</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety week</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and wellness</td>
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<tr>
<td>awareness week</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty-involved programs</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Related student products and evidence
- Roommate success plan
- Community agreement
- Attendance rates/counts
- Survey responses

Collection and evaluation of data/evidence
(1) Staff and resident advisors select a random sample of the roommate success plans and community agreements and use one rubric to evaluate. They input results using a Google Form.
(2) All residents take an online, comprehensive survey that directly addresses outcomes 2-5.

Frequency of data/evidence evaluation for program decision making
Outcome 1: Every semester.
Outcomes 2-5: Once a year.

Results
A staff member compiles the results using Excel and the online survey app. The director and staff discuss the results and develop two informative reports that highlight key results: one for resident advisors and one for future students/parents. A third internal report aimed at the director and staff documents the assessment and details all results (stored in and shared via Google Drive).

Improvement plan
If needed, the director and staff draft an improvement plan. Staff and resident advisors implement the plan the following semester.