

Developing Assessment Plans: The Process, Template, and Attitudes

by

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ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher learning have been challenged to assess institutional learning outcomes (ILO) for both accountability to accreditation agencies and improvement of student learning. Central to the collecting and analyzing data that leads to the recursive process of assessment is the involvement of faculty. Faculty are resistant to assessment of ILO in part because they lack a data method that allows extrapolation beyond assigning a grade. Developing an assessment plan requires the collaboration between faculty and administration where direct measures of assessment in the classroom can be used to demonstrate progress of student learning. The faculty and administration at Kalamazoo Valley Community College worked together to create an assessment plan that used an assessment template to collect and analyze data along with a feedback rubric to be used as part of the peer review process in the assessment plan. Once the assessment template was used for a semester the faculty were surveyed about their attitudes toward the use of a template as well as their general attitudes towards the overall assessment process. The results of the survey suggest that while there is still resistance to assessment the use of a template helps to decrease the resistance.

Keywords: Assessment, plans, templates, attitudes

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In 2008, the United States Department of Education (2010) put forth legislation and policies in an update to the Higher Education Opportunity Act (Public Law 110-315) that emphasized metrics. These metrics include assessment of student learning and are tied to continued accreditation and eligibility for federal funding. These policies have altered priorities of colleges that are struggling with proving they are meeting the demands of external stakeholders in the post-secondary world. Colleges are challenged to examine curricular issues that include review of credit hours and general education requirements for each program of study offered.

Here in the Midwest, institutions of higher learning have been challenged by the regional accreditors, such as the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), to assess progress institutions have made achieving institutional learning outcomes. When the HLC conducted its last accreditation site visit to Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) in 2005, the evaluators reported that the college was not doing enough to assess the eight institutional learning outcomes that the Board of Trustees had identified. These eight institutional learning outcomes were most recently defined in 2004. These institutional learning outcomes, also known as general education outcomes, are the following (KVCC, 2014, p.6):

- Effective oral and written communication
- Ability to think critically and to solve problems
- Ability to work in groups
- Information, numeric, and technology literacy
- A highly developed sense of ethics
- Respect for diversity
- A global perspective
- Strong personal management skills (KVCC, 2014 p. 6)

KVCC was not the only school cited for this deficiency. On average, the HLC cited seven out of ten schools for less than comprehensive institutional learning outcomes assessment efforts (Provezis, 2010).

According to the HLC, demonstrated evidence of student learning is central to ensuring institutions are transparent about how they are achieving their mission. The HLC (2007) maintains that “a focus on achieved student learning is critical not only to a higher education organization’s ability to promote and improve curricular and co-curricular learning experiences and to provide evidence of the quality of educational experiences and programs, but also to fulfill the most basic public expectations and needs of higher education” (p. 1). In other words, the HLC believes that the public expects the college to deliver well-trained, well-rounded students who can think critically. Their belief is consistent with KVCC’s mission statement that states that we are “committed to enriching the lives of our students and communities through quality educational programs and services” (KVCC, 2004). Thus, assessment of institutional learning objectives is essential to measuring the school’s mission, creating plans for improvement, and continuing credibility with the HLC and community at large.

Background and Context for this Report

Most KVCC faculty, when asked by the investigator, were familiar with the concepts of formative and summative assessments as they apply to both course-specific student learning outcomes and program-level outcomes, but these same faculty were at a loss for the means to assess general education curricular outcomes effectively. Up to this point, institutional-level assessment of KVCC's general education objectives had been the bailiwick of the Institutional Research Department that used student exit and engagement surveys to assess the opportunities for continuous improvement in student learning. Following the 2005 HLC review, this method was deemed insufficient for directly assessing student learning according to the HLC.

Accreditation Options

Many of the national institutional accreditation bodies are moving to processes that allow institutions to develop continuous improvement models as the basis for their reaccreditation self-study process. As part of both a process and a product, accreditation provides a valuation of an institution's effectiveness of their mission as well as supporting a continuing commitment to enhance the quality of student learning (SACSCOC, 2012).

The Higher Learning Commission, too, has developed pathways that allow institutions to work toward the recursive process of assessment to meet accreditation requirements. When the last accreditation site visit occurred in 2005, KVCC was using the HLC's avenue for accreditation called the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ), which is one of two methods institutions may use when seeking initial or retaining current accreditation. According to the HLC, "PEAQ employs a four-step

comprehensive evaluation process to determine accreditation status. The program consists of an institutional self-study, an evaluation by a team of trained peer reviewers, and final decision-making by the Commission through three panels” (HLC, 2014a).

The Higher Learning Commission provided Kalamazoo Valley Community College an option to participate in an alternative accrediting program called the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). AQIP was founded on theories of continuous improvement and institutional principles of high performance. The AQIP model attempts to “infuse the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges and universities in order to assure and advance the quality of higher education” (HLC, 2010, p. 6). Despite the goal of AQIP to impart changes within the culture of higher education institutions to embody quality, a lack of progress with assessing general education learning outcomes continues to exist for many community colleges today (Provense, 2010). This lack of progress is a result of several factors. These factors include a lack of understanding how to assess general education outcomes at the institutional level, lack of a clear mechanism for reporting data, and a lack of feedback from the data already collected. There is an overall failure to close the loop on a continuous improvement plan for enhanced student learning.

Institutions of higher education are working across and within curricula to create assessment plans that support continuous improvement of student learning as well as for accountability. Assessment plans are commonly formal reactions to informal observations (Towns, 2010). Therefore the first step is for the institution to make data-driven decisions that can lead to improvements. These decisions must come from faculty and be supported by administration.

At KVCC, for example, when the data of the last 10 years were reviewed, it was noted by the General Education Assessment Committee that the assessment efforts of some departments were much stronger than in others. The data had not been gathered in a manner that made it useful outside of the collecting department. The General Education Assessment Committee concluded that an institutional system should be implemented that would allow the data to be collected in such a manner that the results would be comparable within and among the individual disciplines. Following this administrative decision, a five-person team from KVCC attended the HLC's Academy for Assessment of Student Learning in 2013. The Academy consists of a "four-year sequence of events and interactions focused on student learning, targeted at accelerating and advancing efforts to assess and improve student learning, and designed to build institution-wide commitment to assessment of student learning" (HLC, 2010, p. 251). Participation in the academy provides institutions with the opportunity to examine institutional practices with regards to student assessment of learning objectives. This self-examination allows institutions to reflect on areas of strengths and to identify areas improvement. Institutions then create assessment improvement plans that best meet the needs of the students while supporting the college mission. The academy promoted the use of AQIP action projects to fulfill accreditation requirements and to address mandates concerned with improving assessment data. This process was initiated with an action portfolio, workshops, and feedback on preliminary assessment action plans institutions created while at the academy. KVCC, for example, established a five-year commitment to attend follow-up academies during which the team would report on the results of the assessment efforts.

The purpose of the reporting was to create a “showcase of accomplishments and inventory of good practices” (p. 251).

One of the tenets of the HLC Academy emphasizes that institutional assessment efforts must focus on creating a mechanism where data-driven curricular decisions can be made. These decisions focus not on teaching but on student learning. According to the HLC Assessment Academy Roundtable (2013), most institutions focus assessment efforts on teaching, but in order for assessment to provide continuous improvement, there has to be a cultural shift to a focus on student learning where future curricular decisions at all levels should be informed by the results of the assessment (p. 41). This cultural shift means faculty will need to overcome their perceived fear that assessment will be used as a tool to evaluate their performance (Driscoll and Wood, 2007). Specifically at KVCC, this shift means continued assessment of the eight institutional learning outcomes within programs and at the culmination of programs. The multiple levels of assessment are shown in the table below.

Table 1: *Assessment of Learning Outcomes Overview*

AREAS OF ASSESSMENT	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES
Course	Course-level content	Individual Faculty
Program	Course-level content Program outcomes	Department Faculty Dean
Institution	Institutional Learning Outcomes	Multi-Discipline Faculty Deans Vice President for Academic Services

Within institutions of higher learning and ranging throughout the post-secondary experience itself, assessment of student learning occurs at multiple levels through a variety of means. According to Walvoord (2010), “assessment is the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise,

and resources available, in order to inform decisions that affect student learning” (p. 2). At the course level, instructors assess student learning using course specific content to evaluate progress on well-defined course learning objectives. At the program level, assessment efforts focus on a wider collection of student work across multiple courses and years and evaluate these using broader program criteria. At the institutional level, student work from across disciplines can be assessed using course and program specific content to monitor attainment of the institutional learning outcomes. Intended institutional learning outcomes express concrete ways in which all students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities. The results of assessment data are then applied toward the improvement of student learning in a curricular process of continued improvement.

Furthermore, employer and community expectations of graduates help define the institutional learning outcomes through the perspective of external stakeholders. This accountability, along with student learning, represents a key factor for consideration as faculty and administration emphasize the importance of implementing, documenting, and sharing results of assessment efforts to produce educated students.

As with many institutions, the KVCC course-level outcomes included on official course syllabi have been identified by the lead-faculty responsible for the courses. These same instructors have discretion in selecting what is assessed and how the data are collected. In many workforce development program courses, most program-level outcomes include industry or professional standards. These standards become the outcomes against which the faculty and administration gauge progress. For courses that fall under the umbrella of transfer credits in general education courses, external or

industry standards may not be readily available; therefore, individual instructors have even more discretion in determining what learning outcomes are assessed and how the data are collected. At KVCC, the effect of two different assessment paths, one with and one without industry standards, led to a variety of assessment methods that were not easily correlated among courses or programs resulting in difficulty for the institution to identify reliable data for the Board-approved institutional learning outcomes. Because of these difficulties and lack of consistent approach, the KVCC General Education Assessment Committee felt that a more unified approach was needed.

At the foundation of an effective assessment plan are clear expectations for what is to be assessed, who is responsible for the assessment, how the data will be interpreted and when the data collection and interpretation will take place. Assessment must be orchestrated in such a way that the data are useable for continuous improvement within the classroom to demonstrate student learning as well as useable by outside accreditors as proof of accountability. Banta (2004) states that “focusing on student learning is particularly difficult in community colleges because students enter with such diverse educational goals and are so likely to stop out, transfer, or drop out” (p. 4). Coupling the transitory nature of community college students with the wide variety of definitions of success in completing general education outcomes makes the important task of assessment challenging. KVCC’s efforts to create a unified plan had a further obstacle: the institution’s history of assessment. Earlier assessment efforts had been undertaken by several different administrators and led in a variety of different directions. This history of haphazard assessment further added to the discrepancies among departments and confusion among faculty.

Significance of the Project

Similar to many institutions, this “perfect storm” of assessment needs and requirements led KVCC to dedicate significant efforts to create a clear pathway for assessing institutional learning outcomes that would be reliable, efficient, and sustainable. The five-person Assessment Academy team began by identifying basic assessment process needs, beginning with definitions of the eight stated outcomes for better recognition in courses and across disciplines as well as to nest course-level objectives underneath institutional objectives. They also stressed the importance of developing standardized units of measure and established benchmarks of success. In order for this process to succeed at KVCC, the team also noted that the assessment environment must also change; faculty and administrators would need to commit to using assessment data as part of the continuous improvement process. Thus, in its plan developed as part of the HLC Assessment Academy, KVCC identified three areas of concentration: (1) improved structure, (2) increased measurement and utilization, and (3) an established culture of assessment to improve student learning. A unified plan would allow KVCC to meet the HLC (2003) goal that states “an organization committed to understanding and improving the learning opportunities and environments it provides students will be able to document the relationship between assessment of and improvement in student learning” (p. 3).

Purpose of this Project

This report describes the Assessment Plan, including the process, uniform data collection template, and feedback rubric, developed and implemented as a result of this institutional commitment to improving its assessment efforts. The purpose of this

Assessment Plan was to structure the assessment reporting data and to facilitate feedback on the data to the respective departments, specifically to (1) create a template that can be used to assess institutional learning outcomes, (2) create a rubric to provide feedback about the assessment data so they can be used to make informed decisions about curricular changes, (3) and compare assessment data taken before and after the implementation of the tools.

Guiding Questions

Three questions were developed to guide the Assessment Plan and Pilot Survey. The Pilot Survey examined the willingness of KVCC faculty members to use assessment in a continuous improvement loop when they are provided with a template for submission.

These three questions guided the Assessment Plan and Pilot Survey:

1. Does the use of a template produce improved assessment data collection, more uniform reporting, and increased faculty compliance?
2. Do the template and feedback rubric streamline the recursive process of continuous improvement?
3. How do the template and feedback rubric affect faculty attitudes towards assessment positively?

Project Design and Follow-up Evaluation

Part one of this report focuses on the process the researcher followed in creating the Assessment Plan, including the Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric to be used college wide. The Assessment Template was designed to guide faculty in producing assessment results that can be used across the college's curricula. The Feedback Rubric is

a tool to provide faculty with feedback about the assessment data they have collected and reported.

Part two of this report analyzes the results of the qualitative follow-up survey designed to assess faculty attitudes toward assessment before and after the use of the template. Faculty subjects were selected through purposeful sampling. While assessment can be indirectly measured through student services and exit interviews, the purpose of the follow up survey was to examine faculty attitudes toward assessment through direct measures conducted within the classroom; therefore only faculty were selected to participate. In addition, assessment documents composed without benefit of a template or rubric were reviewed to contribute to what Merriam (2009) calls a richly descriptive (p.16) study.

Abbreviations and Terms

This report uses several abbreviations, acronyms, and specific terms throughout.

- **Assessment Plan:** Refers to the complete assessment project developed for this project, consisting of the process, the Assessment Template, and the Feedback Rubric.
- **Assessment Template:** Refers to the data collection instrument designed to measure progress on ILOs.
- **CCSSE:** Refers to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement created by Center for Community College Student Engagement and administered across 350 colleges and universities in 2014. The CCSSE is an indirect assessment instrument designed to measure institutional practices and student behaviors which correlate student learning.
- **Direct Assessment:** Refers to any method that demonstrates that specific learning has taken place.
- **HLC:** Refers to the Higher Learning Commission, the regional accrediting body for colleges and universities in 19 Midwestern states.

- Indirect Assessment: Refers to any methods that may imply student learning has taken place but does not specifically demonstrate learning or a skill.
- Pilot Survey: Refers to the follow-up survey submitted to all full- and part-time faculty following the initial piloting of the Assessment Plan in 2013. Approximately 67 faculty members responded to the 11-question survey.
- Feedback Rubric: Refers to the instrument developed by the Assessment Committee to provide comments and suggestions to individual departments on their Assessment Template.
- ILO: Refers to the eight Institutional Learning Outcomes defined by the KVCC Board in 2004 and used to define the areas of student learning addressed in KVCC courses and programs and expected to be mastered by all KVCC students.
- KVCC: Refers to Kalamazoo Valley Community College a large suburban community college located in Southwest Michigan.
- NILOA: Refers to the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment whose mission is to “discover and disseminate ways that academic programs and institutions can productively use assessment data internally to inform and strengthen undergraduate education, and externally to communicate with policy makers, families and other stakeholders.”(NILOA, 2012)

Organization of the Project

The following five chapters define the major components of the project. Chapter Two presents a review of the current literature on assessment and general education learning outcomes related to the purpose of this report. In the third chapter the research methodology is outlined and includes the research design, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Chapter Four presents the Assessment Plan, the Assessment Template, and the Feedback Rubric. Chapter Five presents the findings for the Follow-up Survey. The final chapter discusses the conclusions drawn from the findings, applications for institutions such as KVCC, and implications for further research in the field of general education learning outcomes assessment.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the challenge that community colleges face in using assessment to demonstrate both continuous student learning and accountability to external stakeholders. Assessment is one component used by regional accrediting bodies when considering institutional accreditation. These regional accreditors are examining whether an institution is measuring progress on course-level, program-level, and institution-level student learning outcomes. Faculty struggle to use assessment beyond course and program applications. The struggle to use assessment at the institutional level appears to be based on a lack of a clear understanding of what is expected to be included in the assessment data collection process. This chapter introduced the plan to create, implement, and analyze an Assessment Plan that included the development of an Assessment Template, a Feedback Rubric, and a Pilot Survey of faculty attitudes.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Definitions of assessment are much more prevalent in the research literature than descriptions of specific processes for carrying out authentic assessment of general education at the community college level. This chapter describes the foundational definitions and recent practices available on effective assessment of general education outcomes.

According to Palomba & Banta (1999), academic assessment is a process that calls on faculty to work together to articulate learning outcomes, collect data on student performance, and review the aggregated data to inform improvement efforts. Assessment is driven by two overlapping and sometimes competing philosophies. One view is that, for effective teaching and learning to take place, colleges must have clear learning outcomes and ways for determining how students attain those outcomes. Another view is that colleges and their faculty must be held accountable for ensuring that students receive a quality education (Ewell, 2002). These two views of using assessment for accountability and improvement are not mutually exclusive and colleges have been concentrating their efforts two-fold. One effort uses assessment to measure student learning on institutional learning outcomes as part of emphasis on increased accountability to external stakeholders. The second effort uses assessment as part of the

recursive process of continuous improvement of student learning. These overlapping use of assessment for accountability and improvement can be used to inform the other.

Types of Assessment

In their efforts to define effective and appropriate assessment methods, researchers have identified and named specific types of assessment. One distinction is between indirect and direct assessment methods. Indirect measures, according to Price and Randall (2008), are those practices that employ attitudinal indicators of perceptions of knowledge or skills attainment. For example, colleges can assess student learning and engagement through indirect measures with the Community College Student Survey of Engagement (CCSSE), which provides information on student engagement from prospective gains from experience throughout the students' community college experience. According to Weldy & Turnipseed (2010), the strengths of indirect assessment methods are that they provide valuable information for aligning curriculum with employers' expectations. However, one of the limitations of indirect assessment is that some students may have an inflated perception of their own learning. Klein, Benjamin, Shavelson, & Bolus (2007) state that further limitations of indirect measures are that they only sample those who are willing to respond and therefore may not be truly representative.

Direct measures, according to Lòpez (2002), are performance-based, reflecting the actual work a student produces. She also states that, while faculty find things like unstructured problem-solving tasks labor intensive to administer and score, both faculty and students find them "academically meaningful and rigorous and therefore worth their time" (p. 362). For example, faculty evaluations of student learning in the forms of

summative and formative assessments are direct measures of assessment. López (2002), Rieg (2007), and Ames (1992) emphasize that the strengths of these assessment methods are that they are closer to real-time in that faculty has the opportunity to intervene when students are not performing up to standards. However, researchers also note that the major limitation of direct assessment efforts is that they are time consuming. In fact, Nuhfer & Knipp, (2003) state that this kind of assessment is limiting because time alone dictates the amount of material on which students can be tested.

Most researchers, including Maki (2010), endorse the idea that both direct and indirect assessment methods be used to inform another so one “can make inferences about students’ performance levels and answer [the] research or study question” (p. 256).

Valid Assessment Processes

Research also indicates that a valid assessment process includes several factors. Researchers, including Elfner (2005), Bresciani, (2007), Kuhs & Ikenberry (2009), and Ewell (2009), have identified three key factors: responsibility, accountability, and improvement. The first factor, responsibility, encompasses identifying who is in charge of the process. Elfner (2005) provides three possibilities for who should take responsibility for the assessment of institutional learning outcomes within the structure of a higher education institution: (1) those also responsible for the creation of the general education curriculum, (2) an institution-level assessment committee, and (3) a specific committee dedicated only to general education learning outcomes assessment. Bresciani (2007) also suggests that “some general education values can be delivered in general education as well as the discipline or co-curricular program” (p. 10-11). Elfner (2005) states that “a separate general education assessment committee is probably the best

approach to coordination of this important activity” (p. 167). Elfner asserts that the strengths of using a committee, instead of an individual, include building consensus among stakeholders responsible for directly assessing student learning. With general education as its only focus, the committee can concentrate intently on assessment activities for the institution-level learning outcomes.

A second factor is accountability. Many researchers stress the need for accountability to stakeholders (Astin, 1991; Banta & Blaich, 2011; Dunn, McCarthy, Baker, & Halonen, 2011; Elfner, 2005; Ewell, 2009; New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning & Accountability, 2012; Nunley, Bers, & Manning, 2011, p. 6; Trapp & Cleaves, 2005; Yin & Volkwein, 2010). The underlying goals of colleges, especially community colleges, are their commitment to access and affordability. However, Kuhs & Ikenberry (2009) state that “access and affordability are empty gestures in the absence of evidence of *accomplishment*” (p. 1). They surveyed more than 2,000 chief academic officers and provosts about the major factors that prompt assessment. The results showed that most institutions use assessment data in preparation for program and institutional accreditation.

According to Ewell (2009), accountability necessitates that an institution uses evidence to demonstrate conformity with an established standard of process or outcome (p. 7). He also states that it is in the best interests of the institution “to look as good as possible, regardless of the underlying performance.” This limited interpretation for the use of assessment for accountability many also limit the next factor, improvement.

A third factor is improvement of student learning. Wright (2002) states that “assessment zeroes on the crux of the matter, student learning, after decades of fixation

on surrogates: the resources and processes that were assumed to lead to quality education” (p. 251-252). Allen (2006) echoes this thought saying that, like assessment, accreditation focuses on the inputs to student learning rather than the outputs (p.2). In order to improve student learning, areas of strength and weakness in student learning must be examined, and in the case of weaknesses, corrective actions such as redesigning portions of the curricula must be put into place. According to Ewell (2009), too many institutions approach the task of assessment as an act of compliance with the objective being simply to measure something to satisfy regional accreditation requirements. Once accreditation is attained, assessment ends. This once and done attitude is counter to the Department of Education’s mandates as well as the HLC’s policies which stress the importance of ongoing improvements in student learning. Ewell further states that best practice suggests that involving faculty in creating a set of specific teaching-related questions that they want answered can yield substantial dividends (p. 16). For these substantial dividends to happen there must be an institutional shift to a commitment on improvement and assessment.

School Culture and Assessment

One common theme found throughout the research on assessment is the recognition that assessment must become part of the school culture and must include commitment from faculty. Furthermore, research has noted that assessment must tie to the quality of the institution. In the foreword to the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) occasional paper number four, Peter Ewell (2010) and Barbara Walvoord (2010) write that faculty involvement in assessment is essential. In fact, most regional accreditors such as the HLC express the importance of faculty

involvement in their expectations of meeting assessment standards “particularly with respect to the creation of learning goals and of plans linking assessment to improvement” (Provezis, 2010, p. 7).

While research emphasizes that faculty involvement is important because faculty members are familiar with the formative and summative assessments of course-level learning outcomes as they pertain to their classrooms, assessment experts stress that faculty often struggle to connect course-level outcomes with institutional learning outcomes. Provezis (2010) states that “while the accreditors may be major drivers for assessment, it would be far better for institutions themselves, as part of their cultures, to drive student learning outcomes assessment – to create a space for quality improvement independent of the pressures for accountability” (p. 18). Faculty must be the change drivers in creating a culture of assessment.

However, difficulties in getting faculty to embrace assessment beyond the typical course-level or program-level assessment and into the overarching institutional learning outcomes assessment have also been identified in the research. Miller (2012) says that, like the stages of death and dying described by Kubler-Ross in the book *On Death and Dying* (1997), faculty must go through similar stages with assessment. Faculty will start out denying both the need for and the process of assessment of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Anger over assessment and the perceived intrusion it brings often keeps some faculty from embracing assessment of ILOs. Faculty may try to bargain their way out of assessing with the hope that if they participate in assessment efforts for a short time then perhaps they will go away. Finally, the faculty comes to accept assessment. Some will always see assessment of ILOs as a waste of time, while others will embrace

assessment for what it should be — a recursive process of improvement for student learning.

Driscoll and Wood (2007) as well as Haviland, Turley, & Shin (2011) emphasize that, in general, faculty criticisms of assessment include identifying the process as inflexible, mechanical, and reductionist, emphasizing lower order thinking skills, and that there may also be a feeling among faculty that assessment poses a threat the academic freedom, classroom autonomy, and curricular controls.

This faculty opinion is explained in a letter to Trudy Banta, editor of *Assessment Update* (2012). The letter writer cited reasons for the bitterness faculty feel at her institution towards assessment: the assumption that faculty can always improve on what is done in the classroom sends a message that whatever the faculty does will never be enough (p. 4, 10). Other factors include being held accountable for student learning without taking into consideration students' effort, preparedness, goal of learning, or getting a grade. Heifetz and Linksky (2004) say that risks are especially high during times of change because people are asked to give up the things they hold dear (p. 99). In other words, faculty are expected to embrace assessment as a part of their role in the institution by being a catalyst for overall change and improvement of the institution.

Stakeholders

Assessment research indicates that another important aspect affecting successful academic assessment is the influence of stakeholders. Demands for accountability come only from accreditation bodies, but also from multiple stakeholders including students, parents, employers, local, state and federal agencies, and taxpayers (Banta & Blauch, 2011; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Ewell, 2009; Nunley, Bers, & Manning, 2011).

Ewell (2009) offers four guiding principles for responding to calls for external accountability that preserve and develop institutional capacity for evidence-based continuous improvement:

1. Respond visibly to domains of legitimate external concern
2. Show action on the results of assessment
3. Emphasize assessment at the major transition points in a college career
4. Embed assessment in the regular curriculum (p. 14)

Elwell (2009), Brown, DesRosier, Peterson, Chida, & Lagier (2009), and Patlis, Kolen and Parshall (2001) stress that employers are looking for assessment measurements in their advisory committees to help structure the occupational trade disciplines. External stakeholders' perspectives about outcomes gathered from employer surveys, help establish how well students perform in the workplace after graduation, and similar surveys are used to ascertain students' perceptions of the degree to which they have achieved institutional goals, or for occupational programs, the outcomes desired by the external review boards. Volkwien (2010) suggests that measures of student learning can be used as an indication that an institution is healthy, and these data can provide evidence institutions can use to demonstrate effectiveness to external stakeholders.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the literature and research pertaining to the academic assessment process, focusing on faculty involvement with assessment and the regional pathway through the accreditation process. Direct assessment can be conducted at both the classroom level and course level using measures such as testing, student writing, and other student products. Indirect assessment measures at the institutional level include

using employer or student satisfaction surveys. Neither method alone reveals a complete picture of assessment but, when used in concert, institutions can gain a more complex portrait. Both indirect and direct assessment methods are useful in measuring general education outcomes, and thus are effective tools in the recursive process of continuous improvement. In addition, faculty culture must be such that assessment is seen as important not only to meet the accountability requirements established by external stakeholders and accrediting agencies but more importantly as a direct way to inform curricular changes.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Introduction

As is evident from both academic research and the popular press, measuring improvement in student learning has become a priority in higher education as accountability for public funding and improved student retention have increased. In response to this growing concern, national accrediting agencies have emphasized the importance of documenting, implementing, and sharing results of assessment efforts. The Higher Learning Commission, the Midwest's regional accrediting body, developed the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP), a continuous improvement model to guide accreditation. In addition, in response to mounting pressures from their external stakeholders, academic institutions in initiatives are working to formalize a recursive process of continual assessment and improvement to demonstrate increases in student learning. For most institutions, these efforts have centered on identifying general education learning outcomes that cross disciplines and programs and that address the expectations of a diverse student body. As the foundation of student learning, these General Education learning outcomes are the key to creating a recursive process of continual institutional assessment and improvement. The remainder of this chapter describes the process of creating an assessment template based on general education learning outcomes from a single institution.

Purpose and Guiding Questions

The goals of this project were to (1) create assessment templates for both data collection and feedback, (2) analyze the assessment data collected before and after implementation of the templates, and (3) examine faculty perceptions about using the template.

The project's guiding questions were intended to direct effective data collection and analysis and meet the project goal of identifying structures and processes that support general education learning outcomes assessment. As noted in Chapter One, the three guiding principles that led the development process were these:

1. Does the use of a template produce improved assessment data collection, more uniform reporting, and increased faculty compliance?
2. Do the templates and feedback rubric streamline the recursive process of continuous improvement?
3. How do the template and feedback rubric affect faculty attitudes towards assessment positively?

Assessment Plan

As discussed previously, assessment experts emphasize that faculty members must be part of the institutional assessment process from the onset. Also, as Angelo (1995) states, the cornerstone of focused and useful assessment is to establish a set of clear, shared, and implementable goals. Thus, to be successful, formal assessment plans can only be created when faculty clearly articulate student learning expectations (Towns, 2010, p.91). Good assessment plans build on what has been previously gleaned then uses that information to inform future curricular decisions. Figure 1 illustrates the recursive process of assessment and improvement plans; each step is based on the previous cycle and will form a basis for creating the next cycle. Specifically, within the first cycle, the

goals and priorities set by faculty are turned into measurable objectives. These objectives must identify the student learning that the assessment instruments are then designed to assess. Once an assessment plan is put into place, the second cycle involves reviewing the assessment findings and using them to impact decisions within departments and curricular areas. They also inform the questions that will be asked for the next assessment cycle.

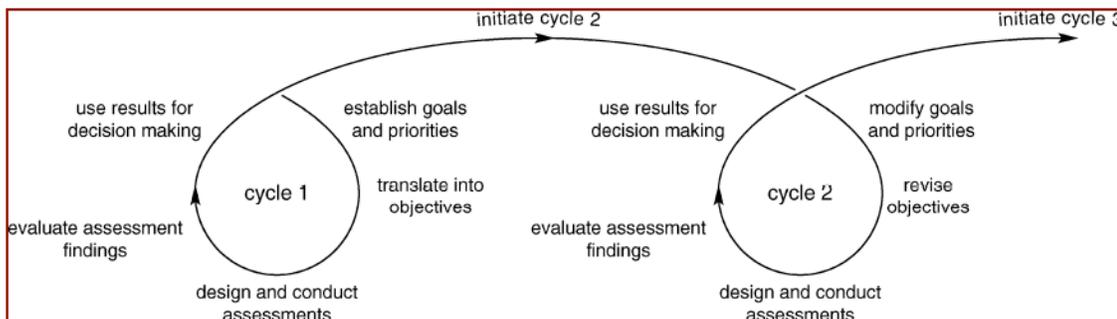


Figure 1: Assessment Plan Cycle (Town, 2010)

Template Construction

In order to create an assessment plan and a culture of assessment, institutions must involve faculty in the assessment plan creation in order to establish ownership, reduce fear of punitive uses of assessment of evaluation purposes, establish a common vision, inform curriculum decisions, update programs of study, and satisfy external stakeholders. Although faculty involvement is essential, all higher learning institutions have not consistently embraced or practiced this concept. For example, as in many institutions, the assessment process at KVCC over the past ten years was driven by administration. Various administrators chaired the committee, and each led the process in a different direction. This inconsistency led to a series of starts and stops with assessment data collection and general confusion among the faculty about what to collect and how to

measure outcomes. As a result, the collected data did not contain uniform information within or among departments.

However, for the past two years, KVCC's institutional learning outcomes assessment has been guided by a committee of twenty faculty and administrators. Previously, faculty had not been a part of the assessment decision-making process. More recently, the KVCC faculty became invested in the assessment process by taking part in creating a college-wide assessment plan that would measure student learning progress, not only on course- and program-level content, but also on the institutional learning outcomes. One of the committee's goals was to create a template that would help faculty streamline data reporting and facilitate the ease of making data driven curricular changes.

The committee believed that an assessment template could guide faculty in creating experiences for students that measure progress toward learning. Not only would student progress towards learning be measured using both direct and indirect methods, but the template would allow results to be standardized between courses and programs. The individual faculty would maintain academic freedom to assess students in appropriate ways, while supplying the institution with data that are easily used to demonstrate institutional effectiveness.

The completed Assessment Template (see Appendix A for the complete template) guides assessment by giving a check box for each of the eight institutional learning outcomes. This Template would help faculty structure assessments based on the general education learning outcomes, report the data in a consistent manner, and make data driven curricular changes. Because institutional learning objectives cover overarching higher functioning thought processes that students encounter over their college career, the

Assessment Plan encourages each course to identify one or two Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO) that are most applicable to the student learning outcomes. Thus, as these ILOs are identified as being central to the course, the instructor can focus specific assessment measures on student learning in these areas. Although other general education outcomes may be touched on in a class, the emphasis on assessment should be limited to those with direct instruction. As a result, curriculum mapping across programs, departments, and the college can ensure that all ILOs receive direct instruction and assessment so that all students will have met the institution's mission of having provided a strong general education.

When the assessment revision process began at KVCC about ten years ago, the college looked for examples of assessment plans that HLC had identified as exemplary. The search turned up one that was especially useful at applicable to KVCC's needs — Blinn College. At that time, their assessment template was modified for the assessment protocol established and used for the next ten years.

In 2012, when the new Assessment Committee of administration and faculty was formed, the committee's exploration for effective models was unsuccessful. The research suggested the need for assessment; however, it did not provide any specific models on how to perform assessments, particularly of ILOs. At that time, HLC was also unable to supply models of effective practices. Furthermore, because regional accreditation options were moving away from PEAQ and encouraging either AQIP or the two Pathways models, they too were unable to provide model practices or materials.

With little research available and no models to follow, the committee worked to create a template that incorporated the assessment processes currently used by many departments. The goal was to develop a uniform process of data collection that kept the ILOs as the common assessment focus. The goal was also to allow each department a range of flexibility in development assessment methods and instruments. Departments build on previous assessment models, which encouraged greater ownership. The Assessment Template and the Feedback Rubric based on flexible options were the end result.

Research Design of the Pilot Survey

A key challenge associated with assessment at KVCC is that, because of the inconsistency of previous efforts, faculty and administrators held a wide range of attitudes about the process. To gauge whether those attitudes had changed because of the Assessment Plan, a pilot survey was developed to collect and analyze faculty feedback about the new template and assessment process.

Pilot Survey Process

This Pilot Survey examined the evidence collected and used that evidence to answer the three guiding questions for the project. The first step was a review of the faculty members' survey responses to identify common themes relating to the template, the reporting process, and then determined their willingness to continue participating in assessment data collection.

All full- and part-time faculty from every department in the college were surveyed following the initial piloting of the Assessment Plan. The data were collected through an online survey, and responses were recorded anonymously. The response rate showed that

16.5% of all faculty returned a completed survey. The only identifiable demographics were employment status (full or part time) and division of the college (general education or occupational).

The survey questions asked faculty whether they had used the Assessment Template in the previous assessment cycle to report progress on student learning. Respondents were offered the opportunity to explain why they had not used the template. Two questions inquired about specific features of the Assessment Template each of which also allowed for open-ended comments. Four questions were used to establish whether a faculty had completed any assessment methods prior and after the release of the Assessment Template. The last two questions were open ended that allowed respondents to offer feedback about the Assessment Template and the Assessment Process in general.

Chapter Summary

Community colleges are under pressure to be accountable for demonstrating evidence of student learning to their stakeholders. At KVCC, institutional learning outcomes have been identified to give all degree-seeking students a broad foundation of learning. By assessing institutional learning outcomes, KVCC can demonstrate at what level students are performing and can create evidence-based strategies to improve learning. The proof of this improved learning is demonstrated in the results of thorough assessment efforts. In other words, assessment is an essential part of a recursive process of improvement.

To address their assessment needs, an Assessment Plan, consisting of an Assessment Template and a Feedback Rubric was developed. A follow-up survey of faculty attitudes about the assessment process was incorporated to capture varied sources

of data and create rich, thorough descriptions of the attitudes surrounding general education learning outcomes assessment. The Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric will be described in detail in Chapter Four and the findings of the Pilot Survey will be discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 4: ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE AND FEEDBACK RUBRICS

Introduction

When Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) identified the need for a comprehensive, faculty-driven process for assessment of the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), the Vice President of Academic Services established a general education assessment committee to monitor the overall progress of reporting assessment data in preparation for an accreditation site visit by the Higher Learning Commission. Like many other institutions, the faculty and administration viewed assessment as simply a requirement for reaccreditation instead of seeing the dual purpose not only for accountability but also to measure improved student learning. The institution had been collecting and recording assessment data from indirect measures such as CCSSE, but had only begun to consider classroom assessment of general education outcomes as an important source of information since the previous accreditation site visit. The committee determined that it was time to look more closely at what assessment information had been collected, as well as what it told them about student learning.

Once that examination began, the committee quickly discovered that the assessment data reported in previous cycles lacked uniformity. In order to help create a more uniform reporting system, the committee began developing an Assessment Template. The intent was to provide the faculty with a guide for the assessment process

and check lists to help guide the submission process, providing clearer expectations of the requirements for assessment of ILOs. To help create that continuous student improvement the committee determined that there was a need not only for uniform reporting that a template could help guide, but also for a mechanism for constructive collegial feedback to take place. This constructive collegial feedback could be constructed using a rubric and peer review.

Part One: Assessment Template

Assessment Template Section One: Mission Statement

The first section of the template requires each department to record its mission statement (see Figure 2). The purpose of this section is to provoke thoughtful conversations within departments about the importance of the coursework, connect coursework to a central, well-defined purpose, and form the basis for all curricular changes in the recursive process. Once this segment is complete, it carries forward into future assessment cycles.



Figure 2: Department Mission Statement

Assessment Template Section Two: Identification of the ILOs

The second section is a series of check boxes for the eight institutional learning outcomes (see Figure 3). The purpose of this section is to remind faculty of the ILOs and to have them make a conscious connection to their course content. These institutional learning outcomes are listed in the official course syllabi for every course offered by the

college. Faculty are asked to select no more than two to assess during a course; however, it is recognized that some courses may touch on many of the institutional learning outcomes.

Institutional Learning Outcomes by Course	
Select no more than two of the Institutional Learning Outcomes that are part of the syllabus for each course.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Effective written and oral communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ability to think critically and to solve problems
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ability to work in groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information, numeric and technology literacy
<input type="checkbox"/>	A highly developed sense of ethics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respect for diversity
<input type="checkbox"/>	A global perspective
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong personal management skills

Figure 3: Institutional Learning Outcomes by Course

Assessment Template Section Three: Course-level objective

The third section requires the faculty to select the course-level objective to be used to assess the institutional learning outcome (see Figure 4). The purpose of this section is to nest the course-level content within the ILO to be measured. The goal of assessment measurement is not to assess for assessment's sake but to use previously identified objects that can also be used to measure institutional learning outcomes. For example, a Math course might list the institutional learning outcome as information, numeric, and technology literacy. In order for the Math Department faculty to assess this institutional outcome, they need to use a course-level outcome to measure. These outcomes must also appear on the master syllabus for the course. In defining its course-level outcomes, the Math Department might use an objective such as "Solves for algebraic equations to assess mastery in both the math outcome and the institutional

learning outcome.” Thus, each outcome must include a level of competence (“mastery”) and the areas to be measured (“math outcome and ILO”).

Identify the student course objectives listed on the master syllabus that support each institutional learning outcome selected above.



Figure 4: Course-level learning outcomes

Assessment Template Section Four: Assessment method

The fourth part of the assessment template is another checklist in which faculty select the course-level assessment method used to measure the Institution Learning Outcome (see Figure 5). At the foundation of the KVCC assessment process is the expectation that content-driven outcomes will be used, not only to assess course-level outcomes, but to assess institutional learning outcomes as well. The purpose of this section is to select the instructional method that best measures both the course level student outcome and the ILO being measured. The template provides a list of commonly used assessment methods. As with any list, it cannot be exhaustive, therefore in anticipation of measurement tools beyond the scope of the list, the list also includes two open-ended options.

Select the measurement tools used in the course to assess this learning objective.

- Analytical synthesis
- Capstone project
- Case study
- Class presentation
- Collaborative learning activity
- Creative/artistic production/performance
- Departmental exam
- Embedded question(s)
- Laboratory exercise
- Pre/post test
- Portfolio
- Research paper
- Self-directed learning activity
- Simulation
- Writing sample
- Other written work. Please describe:
- Other activity. Please describe:

Figure 5: Measurement tools

Assessment Template Section Five: Effectiveness issue

In the next section, faculty members are asked to describe their effectiveness issue — in other words, to describe what it is they seek to measure (see Figure 6). Using the math example from above, just asking students to solve algebraic equations is not enough. The deeper question is can they solve them, how well can they solve them, and is this ability found across a wide number of students. They are also asked to describe the changes they made from the last assessment cycle. The purpose of this section is to begin

to establish a continuous improvement cycle as suggested by regional accreditation agencies.

Effectiveness Issue: Your Question Describe what your department seeks to measure. <input type="text"/>
Describe the changes implemented from the previous assessment cycle <input type="text"/>

Figure 6: Effectiveness issue

Assessment Template Section Six: Benchmark for success

The sixth section asks faculty to quantify learning by stating what students will learn and what is the lowest number of students assessed along with the lowest threshold that would equate to success (see Figure 7). For example, using the math course as an example, the math faculty could decide that 75% of all students will be able to perform algebraic equations with 70% mastery. The purpose of this section is to establish a starting point of comparison. In the first iteration of the assessment tool implementation, faculty set the benchmark of success; then, in later assessment cycles, they can adjust either the benchmark and/or the teaching strategies to attain the benchmark. As part of the assessment plan, these benchmark scores are peer reviewed in the feedback rubric to help departments set and maintain reasonable benchmarks. This Assessment Template section also prompts departments to specify the number of students achieving a minimum score. For example, the Math Department might specify that “60% of all students assessed will achieve a minimum of 70% on a departmental exam.”

<p>Benchmark: Your Measure of Success Describe what students will be able to do or achieve.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Describe the threshold for success in terms of lowest acceptable score. List the percentage of students your department would like to have met that threshold.</p> <p>For example, 60% of students will achieve a score of 70% or higher on a departmental exam. This is simply a place to start. You may find next assessment cycle that your benchmark may need to be shifted.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
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Figure 7: Benchmarks

Assessment Template Section Seven: Outline of action plan

The seventh section of the template provides the structure to begin an action plan (see Figure 8). Faculty are asked to report which students they assessed, whether they assessed all students in all sections, or if they piloted the assessment efforts in a smaller sample of course sections. An expectation of the Assessment Plan is that piloted curriculum changes will be implemented and assessed in all sections once proven. This section also asks for a time frame for the assessment (semester vs. year); this designation facilitates the comparison of changes among courses. This seventh section of the template also asks faculty whether or not their identified benchmark was met, and if it was not, they are to write a corrective plan of action. The form also allows faculty to mention and track trends they notice in the data and explain changes they see from semester to semester.

The purpose of this “Action Plan” is to guide the faculty in the details of assessment. This section helps to establish data that can be analyzed statistically. The

idea is to make changes, then gauge their success rate before making sweeping changes to all sections.

Outline of Action Plan: How You Did It
Who did you assess?

All sections

Piloted sections (please complete) of sections out of sections offered.

When?
Expectation: Assessment is to take place every semester in which the course is offered.

Once per semester.

Once per year.

Ongoing

Figure 8: Outline of the action plan

In the same section, the Assessment Template requires the faculty to record the frequency of the assessment measurement. Another expectation of the Assessment Plan is that assessment data collection will take place every time the course is offered; therefore, this portion of the template records whether the course is taught every semester or once per year. The purpose of this piece is to focus faculty attention on the importance of establishing the assessment timeframe in order to compare data effectively over time.

Assessment Template Section Eight: Evaluation of findings

Section Eight asks faculty to determine whether the benchmark they set in a previous assessment cycle was met (see Figure 9). If the benchmark was not met, a corrective action plan is called for. Not meeting the benchmark could indicate a variety of factors including an unreasonably elevated benchmark, differences in delivery methods, environmental influences, or new practices in the classroom. Faculty are asked to examine the data they collected for differences between sections and semester when

deciding upon how to assess this institutional learning outcome in the next assessment cycle. The purpose of this step is to establish a recursive process of improvement.

Evaluation of Findings: Was the benchmark met?

Yes

No

If no, please describe the corrective action plan.

Describe variables found in the data. Did you notice any trends between the sections?
If so, please describe

Did you notice any changes between semesters?
If so, please describe.

Figure 9: Evaluation of findings

This section also defines the process for sharing the assessment data (see Figure 10). While it is expected that assessment results should be shared with all faculty who are teaching in a discipline, because of the large number of faculty and varying schedules, it is often difficult to have individual conversations about the direction the department intends to take with regard to the assessment results. Thus, this section of the template provides options for sharing assessment results. Information can be shared either at a department meeting, in an e-mailed memo, as an attachment in course management software such as Moodle, or by another method to be determined by the department. The important part is that the direction to achieve continuous improvement is shared.

Detail the formal departmental feedback techniques for the results.
 Expectation: All full-time and part-time faculty will receive feedback

- Department meeting (Full and part-time faculty)
- Department memo (Full and part-time faculty)
- Moodle upload
- Other, please describe

Figure 10: Formal departmental feedback on findings

Assessment Template Section Nine: Action plan

Once the data have been compiled and analyzed, the departmental faculty have the opportunity to craft an action plan where changes to curriculum, teaching methods, and/or learning strategies can be designed then implemented in the next cycle. This is the final step in the recursive process of continuous improvement and the purpose is to guide departments to create and implement changes based on the data collected (see Figure 11).

Action Plan for Improvement to Suggest Evidence of Informed Changes
 Describe any changes you will make in the curriculum, teaching and/or learning strategies.

List the action dates and follow-up required
 The next report will be provided in:

- Six (6) months
- One (1) semester
- One (1) year in the Fall Winter Summer
- one (1) assessment cycle which is

Figure 11: Action Plan timeline

Assessment Template Section Ten: Distribution of findings

The final section of the template requires the date of submission to be recorded. This serves to establish the timeframe for completion (see Figure 12). All completed assessment templates are submitted to the discipline's dean, who in turn is responsible for archiving the data. The list of those faculty who were directly involved with completing the assessment is also recorded. The purpose of this section is also to assist the Assessment Committee in identifying whom to seek out if they need clarification when they complete the next step in the Assessment Plan, the Feedback Rubric.

Distribution of Findings
Submit this completed report to your academic dean.

Date Submitted:

Please list all names of those who were responsible for the data collected:

Figure 12: Distribution of findings

Assessment Template Summary

The ten sections of the Assessment Template were developed to guide the faculty through the assessment process and provide the format that should produce useable data. The format and design of this Template and the Assessment Process also put the responsibility for the process in the hands of the faculty who develop, teach, and assess the college's courses. According to research, faculty should be at the center of assessment efforts (Banta, 1991, Ewell, 2009, Driscoll and Woods, 2007). By moving faculty to the center of the assessment process, KVCC has shown their commitment to improving student learning. Faculty are also at the center of providing feedback for the

department who collect assessment data. They have developed a feedback rubric to offer guidance to complete the recursive cycle of continuous improvement.

Part Two: Feedback Rubric

Feedback Rubric: ILO and SLO comparison

As the Assessment Committee developed its plan, it recognized that, to be effective, the assessment process would need to include a method for “closing the assessment loop.” As assessment research stresses, feedback on the assessment measures is an important step in the recursive process (Ewell, 2009, Provenzis, 2010, Brescani 2007, and Banta 2011). It is at this stage where faculty examine the assessment data and then make informed decisions to modify goals and curriculum for the following assessment cycle (Town, 2010). In the KVCC Assessment Plan, a peer review team compares the assessment data collected with the expectations outlined in the assessment template. Each section is evaluated on whether or not the information is clear and complete. The peer reviewers can also offer suggestions to make the assessment in the next cycle stronger or to ask the department for further clarification. Once the peer reviewers have compiled their comments, those results are shared with the chair of that department who, in turn, shares that information with the remainder of the department. A copy of the complete Feedback Rubric is contained in Appendix B.

As it developed the Assessment Plan, the college determined that no more than two ILOs should be assessed in any one given course. The Assessment Committee recognized that, while courses may touch on many of the outcomes, it is unlikely that an individual course will truly assess all eight. Thus, in the first portion of the Feedback Rubric (see Figure 13), the peer reviewers look for connections between the ILO and the

course-level student learning objectives (SLO). In addition, the peer reviewers evaluate whether the assessment method seems appropriate for the ILO being measured. The intent is not to infringe on the academic freedom of the faculty who are measuring the ILO, but rather, when needed, to open a dialogue about pedagogy and delivery. The hope is that this dialogue will garner a culture of assessment through an organic process of ownership by the faculty body as a whole, not just individuals.

<p>List no more than two of the institutional learning objectives that are part of the syllabus for each course.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Two institutional learning outcomes were listed for each course.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> One of the institutional learning outcomes were listed but not clearly linked to a course.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None of the institutional learning outcomes were listed.</p> <p>List the course learning objectives that support each institutional learning objective.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All course learning objectives were clearly listed for each course.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some of the course learning objectives were listed but not clearly linked to a course.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None of the none objectives were listed.</p> <p>Select the activities/assessments conducted in the course to meet this learning objective.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The activities/assessment selected seem reasonable given the nature of the course.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The activities/assessment selected seem weak given the nature of the course.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The activities/assessment selected seem unreasonable given the nature of the course.</p> <p>COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
--

Figure 13: Feedback Rubric ILO and SLO comparison

Feedback Rubric: Effectiveness issue feedback

The next section of the Feedback Rubric examines the effectiveness of the assessment process and how changes were made from the previous assessment cycle (see Figure 14). This examination begins to establish the continuous loop of improvement. In many cases, the peer reviewers may not be discipline experts; in fact, peer review teams were selected so that discipline experts are not reviewing their own discipline. Thus, it is

vital that the assessment results be written so that they are clearly understandable to all reviewers. This clarity in reporting helps to establish the accountability to stakeholders by using clearly written expectations. The comments and suggestion area of this section allows reviewers to offer open-ended, in-depth feedback about the effectiveness issues.

<p>Effectiveness Issue - The Question</p> <p>Describe what your department seeks to measure.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Desired results for the course were clearly written.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Desired results for the course were unclear.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Desired results were omitted.</p> <p>Describe the changes implemented from the previous year.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable. This is the first year of assessing institutional learning objectives.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Changes implemented from previous year were clearly written.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Changes implemented from previous years were unclear.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Changes implemented were omitted.</p> <p>COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>

Figure 14: Effectiveness issue feedback

Feedback Rubric: Benchmark feedback

The third section of the feedback rubric provides peer reviewers' response on the benchmark of success established by the faculty as the assessment (see Figure 15). The peer reviewers recognize that the initial benchmarks may have been established arbitrarily and this area allows the reviewers to offer insight on how the benchmark may be adjusted to increase student learning. The comment areas also help challenge the faculty collegially to raise the standards when a benchmark appears to be set too low.

Benchmark - Your Measure of Success

Describe what students will be able to do or achieve.

Desired results for the students were clearly written.

Desired results for the students were unclear.

Desired results were omitted.

Describe the threshold for success in terms of lowest acceptable score. What level of accuracy is required by the student?

Threshold within acceptable limits.

Threshold marginal.

Threshold too low/not set.

List the percentage of students your department would like to have met that threshold. What is the minimum benchmark you would like to see met?

Percent of students expected to meet or exceed threshold acceptable.

Percent of students expected to meet or exceed threshold too high.

Percent of students expected to meet or exceed threshold too low.

Not identified.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Figure 15: Benchmark feedback

Feedback Rubric: Mechanics of assessment feedback

The fourth section of the Feedback Rubric looks at the mechanics of the assessment with reference to methods used to complete the assessment and the total number of students and sections assessed (see Figure 16). The focus is on clarity and understanding of the methods used. In this section, the peer reviewers have an opportunity to suggest changes in the number of students assessed. They can also question sample size and reliability.

List tools that can be used to measure the inquiry and benchmark.

Tools listed seem appropriate for subject matter.

Tools listed seem marginal for subject matter.

Tools listed not appropriate for subject matter.

List the total number of sections assessed.

Total number listed:

Total number missing:

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Figure 16: Outline of action plan – tool usage and sample size

Feedback Rubric: Blinn Organizer feedback

Part of the Assessment Action Plan was to use the Blinn Organizer because it was a familiar piece from previous assessment methods used at KVCC (see Figure 17). The Blinn Organizer was adapted from the assessment work done at Blinn College in Brenham, Texas. The organizer was shared with KVCC’s Vice President of Academic Services during an assessment conference he attended in 2007. The faculty have been using this adapted organizer since its introduction that year. The entire Blinn Organizer can be found in Appendix C. Therefore, as part of the Feedback Rubric, the reviewers also look at how the Blinn organizer is completed then compare the assessment data with the new format template. The purpose of including this section was to help to ease the transition away from institutional use of the organizer and toward acceptance and implementation of the new Assessment Template and Assessment Plan, with as few kinks as possible.

Research Data and Blinn Organizer

Who was assessed?

Groups assessed clearly listed.

Groups assessed not clear.

What were the results for each Institutional Learning Objective?

Results clearly written.

Results unclear.

Results missing/incomplete.

What does each of the numbers represent?

Interpretation clear and complete.

Interpretation unclear and incomplete.

Interpretation missing.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Figure 17: Blinn Organizer feedback

Feedback Rubric: Evaluation of findings feedback

The final section of the Feedback Rubric, the evaluation of findings portion (see Figure 18), scrutinizes the data submitted for the benchmarks, data trends within and between the sections, and how the information was shared among stakeholders. This segment begins to build the foundation for upcoming assessment cycles by confirming the presence of important markers.

Evaluation of Findings

Was the benchmark met? By How Many?

Benchmark met.

Benchmark not met.

Benchmark not identified.

Figure 18: Benchmark feedback

Because the benchmark was self-selected by the departments when the assessments were first designed, the peer reviewers are looking to see if that was expressed in a manner that made sense and was met. The Assessment Plan, and thus, this Feedback Rubric, recognizes that accountability to external stakeholders is an important part of assessment, and that transparent reporting of assessment information is vital.

Trends in the data can lead to changes in the curriculum or as support for continuing on course with the curriculum (see Figure 19). It is important to look at variances between classes and between semesters. Assessment data from high enrollment courses are reported as an aggregate therefore the variables of instructor influence on the data is not a focus. Faculty members are fearful that assessment will be used as an evaluation tool (Driscoll & Wood, 2007); therefore, the aggregate reporting is designed to reduce the fear that an individual instructor's data could be used against them.

<p>Describe variables found in the data</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Trends (or lack of trends) noted and clearly stated.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Trends noted but unclear.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No trends listed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable. First year of assessment.</p> <p>How do these results compare with previous semesters?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results noted and discussed in detail.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results discussed but lack detail.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No results discussed.</p>

Figure 19: Data trends feedback

To close the loop on this recursive process it is vital that all stakeholders be kept apprised of the assessment data and changes to be made to the curriculum (see Figure 20). The template offers a variety of ways to share the information with the stakeholders

including an internal course management system. It is in the section that peer reviewers have the opportunity to share thoughts and insights about the trends they see in the data submitted. Each reviewer brings a unique perspective to data interpretation and by compiling these unique interpretations the stakeholders receive a more meaningful perspective on a potential course of action required.

<p>Formal feedback techniques.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Shared with all stakeholders.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Shared with most stakeholders.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Shared with some stakeholders.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not shared with stakeholders.</p> <p>COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; background-color: #e6e6fa;"></div>

Figure 20: Distribution of findings for improvement

The final section of the feedback rubric looks at the timeline for changes (see Figure 21). If the need for change is indicated, the peer reviewers are looking for a concrete implementable action plan for assessment in the upcoming cycle. If no changes are needed it is expected that the current assessment methods will be employed in the future cycle. The comment section can be used to offer suggestions on timeline and implementation.

Action Plan for Improvement and Follow-up Schedule
Describe any proposed changes in the curriculum, teaching and/or learning strategies.

Changes not needed.
 Changes described in detail.
 Changes described but lack enough detail.
 No changes described.

List the action dates and follow-up required.

Dates and follow ups listed.
 Dates and follow ups not listed.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Figure 21: Action plan implantation schedule

The part of the feedback rubric requires the assessment data to be shared not only among stakeholders for improvement purposes but with the administrative dean for accountability purposes (see Figure 22). Because this information is so vital to the dual purpose of improvement and accountability the question is asked again. The first appearance of the question in section three (see Figure 14) of the Rubric wanted the action plan shared among stakeholders who are directly responsible for improvement-- in other words, the faculty. The last section verifies that all stakeholders, faculty and administration, have access to the findings and the plan.

Distribution of Findings
 To whom were the findings distributed, when, and by what means?

Results distributed to all stakeholders.
 Results need to be more widely distributed.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Figure 22: Distributions of finding – for accountability

Implementation of the Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric

At the time of the writing of this report, the template has been used for two semesters and the feedback rubric has only been used for one. The peer review team met to discuss their findings of the assessment data and have been charged to share feedback with the disciplines. Each peer reviewer rated the assessment piece individually then the team discussed and compiled comments that will be shared this fall. Currently the Feedback Rubric only addresses the process of data collection. This rubric was created as a starting point for discussion on how an assessment plan was created, what data were collected and how best to interpret the results. It is up to the reviewers to determine whether or not the data collected and interpreted using the Assessment Template actually reflects quality. The open ended responses were intended to note upon the quality of conclusions The Feedback Rubric may need to be revamped depending upon the ease with which the data were shared.

Pilot Survey

Introduction

The newly designed Assessment Template was first used in the fall of 2013 in high enrollment general education courses, and the resulting data were reviewed using the Feedback Rubric in the winter semester (January-April) of 2014. In the winter of 2014, the occupational courses were asked to use the Assessment Template, and the data collected were reviewed using the Feedback Rubric in the fall of 2013 The Pilot Survey was administered to all faculty at the end of the 2014 Winter semester to gauge their perceptions of the Assessment Template. This section describes the survey and discusses the results and implications.

Faculty Survey

An 11-question survey was sent out to 130 full-time and 245 part-time faculty at the end of the winter semester. The complete survey can be found in Appendix D. Participants had two weeks to respond and were sent a reminder after the first week. Responses, which represented 16.5% of all faculty, were reported anonymously using data collection software called Survey Monkey. Demographics of employment status and teaching area within the college were the only individual identifiers. All demographic information was reported in aggregates. No individual information could be used to identify a specific person.

The first questions collected demographic data related to employment status and area of service. The results on employment status returned 62 respondents, 45 of those were full-time faculty and 17 part-time (see Figure 23). Of those who responded, 75% were full-time faculty, and 27% were part time. Considering the entire faculty body, 34% of the full-time faculty submitted responses while 7% of the part time faculty responded.

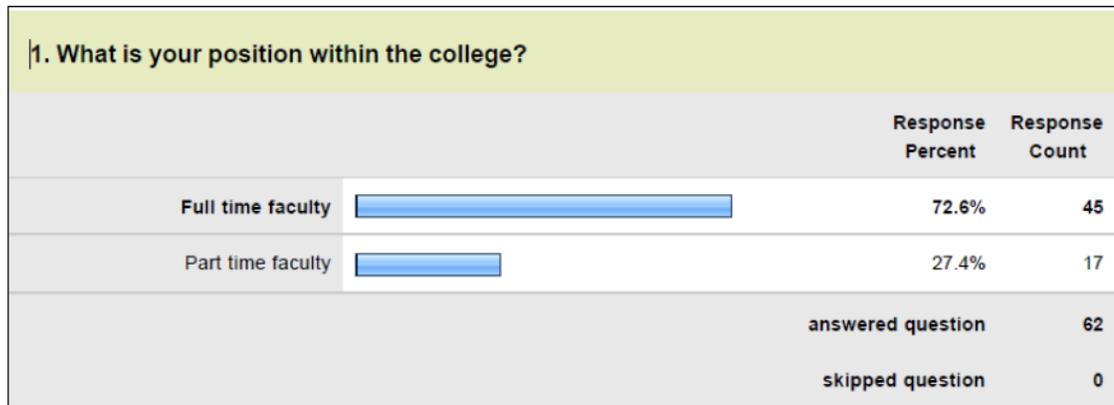


Figure 23: Employment status

The second question asked about area of service within the college. Of the respondents, 70% served as part of the general education division of the college, and 30%

served in the occupational areas (see Figure 24). The employment status and area of service were the only demographic data collected; no connections between an individual faculty member and their specific responses were collected.

2. In what area of the college do you serve?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
General education		70.5%	43
Occupational		29.5%	18
answered question			61
skipped question			1

Figure 24: Area of service

The third question asked whether or not the respondent had used the new assessment template to report progress on the college’s general education outcomes. It was assumed because all faculty are responsive for assessment collection that all full-time faculty had the opportunity to use the template in the past year; however, survey results indicated that 55% of the faculty had not (see Figure 25). Of the remaining respondents, 42% had not used the template and another 3% was unsure that a template existed. The seemingly high negative response rate is not unexpected since this was the first time occupational faculty were being asked to use the Assessment Template. A link to the Assessment Template was provided so respondents could review the document before completing the survey.

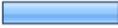
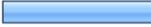
3. Have you used the new general education assessment template to report progress on KVCC's general education outcomes?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		41.9%	26
No		54.8%	34
I don't know click here to see the template http://home.kvcc.edu/formsonline/FacultyForms/outcomes.php		3.2%	2
answered question			62
skipped question			0

Figure 25: Template awareness

The next two questions asked respondents about assessment options available in the Template. Question 4 asked if the assessment template gave the user a clear picture of the options available to them to use for the purpose of assessment. Of the respondents, 61% responded that the template did give them a clearer picture (see Figure 26). The remaining 39% responded that it did not. These respondents were prompted to explain the negative response in a comment box. The reason most often given (8/18) as an explanation for a negative response indicated that the respondent was unaware that the template existed. The second most often given response (4/18) indicated that the respondent taught in the occupational disciplines. The remaining responses lack a common theme to allow for generalization.

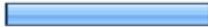
4. Did having a template give you a clearer picture of options available to you for assessment purposes?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		60.8%	31
No		39.2%	20
If no, please explain.			18

Figure 26: Assessment options

Question 5 asked if the template provided enough options for reporting outcomes progression (See Figure 27). Of the respondents, 75% responded in the affirmative, while 25% responded negatively. The negative responses were asked to provide a comment.

5. Did the template provide enough options in reporting outcome progression?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		75.0%	36
No		25.0%	12
If not, please explain.			12

Figure 27: Enough outcomes options for reporting

Question 6 asked whether or not respondents had submitted assessment data prior to using the Assessment Template (see Figure 28). Of the respondents, 51% reported that they had submitted data prior to using the Template. The remaining 49% had not, and they indicated that they were unfamiliar with the information or the existence of the template.

6. Did you submit general education assessment data in any semester prior to the release of the assessment template?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		50.9%	27
No		32.1%	17
If No, why not?		5.7%	3
i. New to the position		9.4%	5
ii. Not required to do so previously		22.6%	12
iii. Not included in the data collection process		11.3%	6
Other – please explain			8

Figure 28: Prior submissions of assessment data

Questions 7 and 8 asked about the respondents' impressions about the ease of assessment data reporting before (see Figure 29) and after (see Figure 30) using the Template. Close to 38% of those who had used the previous methods of assessments found that the processes presented average difficulty. However, 40% rated prior assessment collections methods as difficult. Only 21% felt that the prior methods were easier to use.

7. Rate the ease of reporting you experienced with using the previous methods PRIOR to the assessment template.							
	Difficult		Average		Easy	Rating Average	Rating Count
	28.9% (13)	11.1% (5)	37.8% (17)	8.9% (4)	13.3% (6)	2.67	45
answered question							45
skipped question							17

Figure 29: Perception of assessment reporting

When asked to rate the ease of data collection using the assessment template, 58% of the respondents felt the process of assessment data reporting was of average difficulty. The percentage of those who rated that the method of data collection prior to using the template as difficult dropped after use of a template. Only 17.5% felt that assessment data reporting was difficult compared to 40% prior to using the template. Of the respondent who answered, 25% rated the template as easy to use, which reflects an increase from 21% prior to using the template.

8. Rate the ease of reporting assessment data USING the template.							
	Difficult		Average		Easy	Rating Average	Rating Count
	2.5% (1)	15.0% (6)	57.5% (23)	17.5% (7)	7.5% (3)	3.13	40
	answered question						40
	skipped question						22

Figure 30: Perceptions of assessment data reporting after using the template

Question 9 asked the respondents about the impact the template had on their willingness to report assessment data (see Figure 31). Of those who responded, 33% reported that the template played a role in their willingness to report assessment data. The majority, or 56%, reported that their attitudes toward assessment reporting had not changed. On the other end of the scale, 11% reported that their willingness to report data decreased with the use of a template. The use of an assessment template appears at minimum to do no harm to assessment reporting it also shows that one-third of the faculty found that having a template to use for assessment reporting did indeed increase their willingness to report data. This increase in willingness to report could be the first step in a shift to a culture where faculty embrace assessment.

9. What impact has the template had on your willingness to reporting data?							
	I am less likely to report		No change	I am more likely to report		Rating Average	Rating Count
	6.7% (3)	4.4% (2)	55.6% (25)	11.1% (5)	22.2% (10)	3.38	45
answered question							45
skipped question							17

Figure 31: Willingness to report data

Questions 10 and 11 were open-ended to allow respondents the opportunity to share whatever they liked about the assessment template and the process in general (see Figures 32 and 33).

10. Is there anything you'd like to share about assessment template?	
	Response Count
	17
answered question	17
skipped question	45

Figure 32: Assessment Template perceptions

11. Is there anything you'd like to share about the assessment process?	
	Response Count
	19
answered question	19
skipped question	43

Figure 33: Assessment process perceptions

Of the seventeen responses offered to Question 10 eight noted that the assessment instrument's mechanics need to be addressed. The web-fillable PDF was difficult to use, and the data were not retrievable once submitted. They reported that the highly repetitive nature of the template was a source of frustration. The next largest groups of respondents, a total of six, simply reported that they had nothing more to add. The final three responses indicated that they were happy with the template and that it was easy to use.

Three themes emerged from the responses to Question 11, the largest group, which consisted of eight comments, shared general frustration with the process of assessment reporting. These comments pointed to the intermittent assessment history of the institution as a source of frustration citing that the college has a lack of long-term continuity in the process. Another theme that emerged was the desire for feedback. These seven comments all indicated that they would like feedback on topics as general as the process of data collection to as specific as how a particular department is performing. The last theme that emerged was the desire that the process not change. The final four comments offered words of encouragement to keep the assessment process on the same course currently held.

Findings

When the written responses were grouped together, four themes emerged when analyzing the responses from the survey. These four themes are generalized below.

Finding 1: Faculty are unaware of the Assessment Template

Questions 3, 4, and 5 asked faculty specific information regarding the use of the template. More than half of the faculty had not used the Assessment Template before.

This high proportion of negative responses could indicate that assessment is not measured in every section. This would not be an unreasonable assumption since assessment data collection has been limited to high enrollment courses while the survey was sent to all faculty regardless of course taught. It could also indicate that while assessment data are being collected, the template itself is only being used by the persons responsible for data compilation and submission. This assumption is reasonable in that the chairperson or the lead instructor of high enrollment courses was designated to compile and submit assessment data to avoid duplicate data. Some of the respondents indicated that, since they taught in an occupational trades area, this was the first time they had seen the Assessment Template. A reasonable results since the occupational courses were only asked to submit assessment data on ILOs in the winter semester of 2014.

However, the knowledge and use of the Assessment Template can inform data collection, interpretation and curricular changes. As a result of these possibilities, the General Education Outcomes Committee needs to communicate the existence of the Assessment Template more effectively. Better communications can lead to more uniform data collection when all those responsible for assessment use the same format. In addition, similar formatting can make the interpretation of data collected more streamlined. The General Education Outcomes Committee must continue to work with departments to help create assessments that are administered in the majority of classes and programs.

Finding 2: Faculty are resistant to using the Assessment Template

One respondent indicated that he/she was not convinced of the value of assessment and therefore would not submit results using any method. This statement

supports the findings of Driscoll and Woods (2007) who reported that there will always be those who will never participate and, therefore, that assessment information will need to be gathered in another manner or by others in the same discipline. Another respondent stated that the director of his/her area did not require them to collect assessment data. It is unclear whether this person is part of the occupational or the general education faculty, since there are multiple directors in each of the area. However, because assessment of student learning is vital to the health of all disciplines, clearly there is a need for greater communication on the importance of assessment among all faculty in all areas.

Some of the responses targeted the mechanical difficulties of using the online fill-able template. These responses reflect some of the difficulties with the first version of the template: the data could not be saved in order to be retrieved for further editing. The text boxes would expand when being filled in, but would only copy the text in the active window when printed, leaving much of the data entry obscured and unrecorded. The Assessment Committee was made aware of the technical issues and stressed the need for technical issues to be addressed in order to ease the buy-in of the Template and the process.

Faculty were also resistant to using the Assessment Template citing that it was too prescriptive and narrow to be useful for data collection. The remaining responses stated that they felt the template was fragmented, that the previous attempts at assessment were already clear enough, and that this template focused on post-test results that did not accommodate value-added models. This lack of knowledge and awareness of the Assessment Plan indicates that the institutional learning outcomes assessment committee must increase communications about the availability and intent of the template.

Another comment shared about the template was that it limited the kinds of courses that could be assessed to those courses that solely relied on *knowledge retrieval* instead of *application of knowledge*. Some felt that the template created a framework that only fit a few courses and that it could not be used to assess both the courses in general education and courses within specific programs. Another respondent indicated that the template is a limiting factor to those who have education backgrounds because they do assessment “in the moment.” The respondent went on to say that those people who lack an education background may find the template too confusing and consider it more work to complete.

The responses to these questions indicate several misconceptions about the Assessment Template. The intent of the template is not to assess the courses but rather to assess the students’ success in meeting the Institutional Learning Outcomes that are the foundations of all courses regardless of program. This misinterpretation of the purpose of assessment indicates that there is still need for clearer understanding of how institutional learning outcomes are applicable across curricula. The “limiting” nature of the template also indicated a misunderstanding about its structure. The template provides more than 15 options for how assessments might take place, plus provides a place to add others. Thus, the template is meant to be a springboard to assessment data that is consistent and useable across curricula without limiting an instructor’s academic freedoms.

Finding 3: Use of the Assessment Template shifts attitudes

While the sample size is small, there is a positive shift in perception with the use of the template. When examining the changes from attitudes towards assessment

reporting prior to using the Assessment Template almost 29% of the faculty reported that assessment reporting was difficult. When these same faculty used the Assessment Template, only 2.5% reported that the Assessment Template was difficult to use. An average difficulty rating would indicate that the template has enough flexibility to offer guidance to those who need it without being so prescriptive that it removed the academic freedom to assess in the manner an individual instructor deems most reliable and effective for his or her course. In essence the Assessment Template does not harm and for many the use of the Assessment Template had a positive impact on attitudes. The data would seem to indicate that making assessment reporting easier by providing a template makes the majority of the faculty more willing to complete assessment activities for their courses. These results also support assessment research; Driscoll and Wood (2007) indicated that faculty interaction on assessment is desirable to create a continuous loop of improvement and that for assessment to be successful assessment must be faculty driven. This desire for access to others' assessment work would seem to indicate that there are faculty who are wanting to have those good models to use as a template when they craft their own assessment.

There were positive comments shared about the template. One respondent stated that he/she liked the template approach and welcomed the uniformity in the quality of submissions. The respondent expressed dismay that previous assessment data were submitted hand-written which he/she interpreted as "garbage." Other positive comments stated that the template was easy to use with clear expectation and that this method was better than previous methods.

Some of the positive comments from the faculty indicated that they welcomed the use of the template and planned to use the Assessment Template results to inform their curricular changes intended for fall. Respondents shared gratitude towards having guidance the Assessment Template provided through the assessment. Many of these same respondents thanked the committee for their hard work towards assessment issues.

Finding 4: Faculty want a consistent process

The final question of the Pilot Survey looked at systematic assessment issues. Respondents were invited to share their thoughts about the assessment process as a whole, not just comments about the template. The comments fell into two broad categories. One group felt that the need for assessment on the institutional level was just a matter of “spinning our wheels” and would only assess under pressure from administration. The respondents stated that there was a lack of continuity, a lack of feedback, and a lack of true improvements. One respondent shared his/her wish for continuity with this comment “for the love of all things holy, don’t make any more changes to the process!!” While most comments were not as strongly stated as this respondent’s, the consistency theme carried through many of the comments: the goal of the template is to provide continuity by using the same format to report from assessment cycle to assessment cycle. In addition to consistency in reporting expectations, the faculty are hungry for feedback and confirmation that their assessment efforts are on the right track. The institutional learning outcomes committee has been in agreement that there has been an admitted lack of feedback. The committee has looked to the administration to tell them they are doing what is required for assessment, but according to the research, assessment must be faculty led. With the new feedback rubric in place, the committee of

faculty and administration has begun to analyze the assessment submissions through peer review and provide valuable opportunities for dialog about the curriculum and assessment. The conversations between the peer reviewers and those faculty who collected and analyzed their assessment data are slated to begin in the fall 2014. With this dialogue in place, assessment can become a recursive process of improvement that is faculty driven.

There still appears to be a lack of understanding about why institutional learning outcomes are assessed. One respondent called for the substitution of outside accreditation for skills within their program area rather than assessing the ILOs. The message that institutional learning outcomes address the overarching skills all students are expected to exhibit upon exit of the college must be reinforced. It is important that a nursing student, for example, be able to perform the necessary skills needed as required by their board examinations. These are in addition to the skill sets students learn in any particular program. However, it is as important that the nurse be able to critically think in an emergency setting. Therefore the assessment of nursing students' institutional learning outcome of critical thinking is just as vital as their ability to perform routine medical assessments. The faculty must be able to demonstrate that students can perform skills required of the course-level content as well as those the college defines as being essential to all students who have earned an associate's degree. It is these combined outcomes that are the hallmark of a well-rounded student.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric developed to help streamline the ILO assessment process at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

The Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric have had limited use; however, the results are encouraging as is verified by a survey.

As described in this chapter, an 11-question survey was distributed to 375 faculty. Demographics of employment status and area of service were collected in aggregate. The faculty members were asked their perceptions of the assessment process prior and after using the assessment template. The results showed that the many of the faculty were unaware of the presence of the Assessment Template either because they have not had exposure due to area of service to the college or because they were not directly responsible for departmental assessment activities. Findings indicated that there is still a bastion of resistance among faculty who see assessment as a futile effort. The results showed that the use of the Assessment Template to report assessment data positively affected faculty attitudes. However, there is still further need to communicate the importance of assessing institutional learning outcomes. The final chapter discusses the conclusions and implications for further research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Introduction

As the pressure continues to increase for accountability in higher education, regional accreditors have tasked educators with using more usable and credible measures to assess student learning. However, educators continue to struggle with finding effective methods that produce uniform, consistent results and also meet the needs for both accountability and improvement because in part they lack a malleable instrument for data collection. This project attempted to provide faculty with a mechanism to collect data that was uniform across disciplines yet flexible enough to meet the varied educational needs of individual instructors.

The Assessment Plan

The first portion of the project created an Assessment Plan, including an Assessment Template that faculty at KVCC could use when collecting and reporting assessment data. This Template allowed faculty to measure institutional learning outcomes in their own classrooms then report the data to be used to create data-driven curricular changes. In an effort to respond to expectations of higher education accreditors for continuous student improvement where changes are made based in a recursive process, the institution also created a Feedback Rubric to create a dialog between and among faculty about expectations what assessment should look like and begin a recursive

process of data-driven assessment as part of this Assessment Plan. Feedback helps instructors gauge the effectiveness of current classroom assessment practices. The KVCC Assessment Plan — Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric — was designed to prompt ongoing conversation about effective ways to shape future classroom learning, thereby developing the recursive process aimed at learning about learning.

Survey Findings

To assess the initial success of the new Assessment Plan, the Assessment Committee conducted a short survey to see if there was any difference in faculty attitudes towards assessment. The data showed a shift of attitudes from negative feelings toward assessment when the template was not employed to more positive feelings when the template was employed. While the overall feelings toward assessment were not overwhelmingly rated as extremely positive, the shift toward the positive exists. The use of a template for data collection makes the assessment data more uniform and familiar. This familiarity has led faculty to be less resistant to assessment simply for accountability and more receptive to assessment for continuous student improvement.

Implications of Identified Issues

One of the overarching criticisms of the template was lack of knowledge of its existence. The template is used by only a few faculty who are responsible for reporting the assessment data. This differs from the number of faculty who are responsible for collecting assessment data. Clearly there is a need to communicate the existence of the template for faculty use. While the Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric are available to all faculty members through the college's intranet, the institutional learning outcome committee needs to better voice the presence and purpose of the forms.

A larger portion of the faculty still fails to see the importance of assessment itself. The faculty holds the belief that assessment will go away once accreditation is granted by the HLC. They further feel that there is little benefit in exerting the effort to collect assessment data since the data is only used for accountability. Because feedback on the current assessment plans have not been provided which would have closed the assessment loop diagramed by Towns (2010), faculty fail to see that accountability is only part of the assessment picture and that continuous improvement in student learning is the other. The college and the general education assessment committee must find ways to stress the importance of assessment to faculty as well as ways to better explain its importance. Faculty need to see that assessment is what we do for a living, not just something that can be pulled out of a box for accountability. It must be used every day for classroom level improvement. Researchers like Driscoll and Wood (2007) have said that faculty fear that assessment could be used against them. There seems to be a division between those who teach as content experts and those who teach as educators. One of the survey respondents expressed this view in the following statement:

Good teachers/instructors see the value of ‘assessing our assessment.’ I think content teachers (those who have NO Ed background beyond their departmental content) will be very reticent to utilizing anything they see as uncompensated labor. The rest of us do so because it is second nature to us after years of seeing assessment (of students and ourselves) as essential to our overall success as educators....

It would be interesting in further studies to see if this division remains.

One of the biggest disconnects between faculty and assessment is that only the full-time faculty seem to be collecting and reporting assessment data. It is unclear whether this is because the part-time faculty simply did not respond to the survey, since roughly only 7% of the part-time faculty submitted responses, or if part-time faculty are

not included in assessment activities. The results of the survey show that 35% of the full-time faculty responded to the survey and fewer than 1% said that they were not involved with assessment.

Assessment of student learning using direct measures can only be measured by the faculty and therefore has to be the responsibility of all faculty regardless of employment status. The importance of including the part-time faculty in institutional learning outcomes assessment has to be stressed to the full-time faculty to broaden the chance for continuous improvement. The faculty must be willing to collaborate on and implement assessment strategies that will be recorded in the data collection cycle. These full- and part-time faculty must work together to benefit all students in the continuous loop of improvement. Assessment is everyone's responsibility.

Implications of the Study

Communicate the need for assessment

If assessment of institutional learning outcomes is to have an impact on the recursive process of improved student learning, then faculty have to be made aware of the potential. This awareness extends from simply knowing that tools like the assessment template exist to understanding how institutional learning outcomes assessment can be used as a method to demonstrate and impact classroom learning. Greater awareness of the institutional learning outcomes can be achieved through an increase in conversations among faculty. Faculty are unaware that ILOs exist or which of the ILOs are to be assessed in their own courses. The college, through the Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee, must increase awareness through faculty workshops and email

messages that are targeted to full- and part-time faculty. The ILOs could be posted around campus as simple awareness campaign bringing them to the forefront of consciousness. By making the ILOs more visible throughout the college the hope is that a greater commitment to learning about learning will be established.

Assessment as recursive process

Assessment serves a dual purpose of accountability and improvement. While the data collected by faculty more directly impacts improvement when used to inform course level curricular changes, the college can also use the assessment data to prove to stakeholders that the college is delivering on its promise to produce well-rounded citizens of the world. The Assessment Template sets the stage to collect data that is comparable within and across curricula. The template provides faculty with a tool to begin the discussion of improvement and the college with a tool to begin to show external stakeholders like regional accreditors that students are competent in the ILOs.

The Feedback Rubric is a way for faculty to share with other faculty the assessment data and to offer insights and suggestions for improvements to curriculum. The Feedback Rubric is an important part of the assessment cycle that faculty can use to self-regulate their expectations. By using faculty peer review and follow-up conversations based on the assessment data collected, the faculty who set benchmarks at the extreme can be challenged and mentored to create student centered curricular changes in a collegial atmosphere.

Include all faculty

In addition to communicating the need for assessment, it is important that all faculty, both full- and part-time, be involved with assessment of institutional learning outcomes. A student should be able to achieve the same outcomes regardless of the employment status of the instructor. Assessment is everyone's responsibility. With the trend of increasing part-time faculty at the college, it becomes even more vital that these valued colleagues be included in the assessment decisions. Part-time faculty members outnumber the full-time faculty, yet they have very little input to assessment — either in design or oversight. This clearly needs to change. Nationwide, the ranks of part-time faculty are growing, and these marginalized educators need to be included in the mainstream processes to help shape classroom practices.

Continue with consistent methods

One of the underlying themes in the responses from faculty when asked if there was anything they wanted to share about the assessment process in general was the fear that the assessment template would be changed or abandoned again. Faculty members collect and compile assessment data once per year; therefore, changes to the process on an annual basis cause faculty to start from scratch with each assessment cycle. This continual change leads to inconsistent data reporting as well as creating a faculty body that is distrustful of the process.

This project created an Assessment Plan that is to be used on an ongoing basis, which should help guide the Kalamazoo Valley Community College faculty to more uniform assessment data collection and reporting. It also provided information that might

prove helpful to other institutions that are also struggling to collect and report assessment data. Because of its clear expectations, ease of use, and consistency in data reporting, this Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric have potential to be adapted for use at other institutions.

Limitations

This project was limited to one college. It would, therefore, be useful to conduct further research with a number of colleges who have crafted assessment templates or processes that share these goals. The survey of faculty is also limited in that it did not include a representative proportion of faculty based on their employment status. Non-instructional faculty may face different challenges and offer differing perspectives on assessment. Future researchers may wish to design an instrument targeted directly by employment status.

The results of the project point to a limitation in the length of time the Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric were used. A longer period of time than the one-year interval might lead researchers to draw different conclusions.

Recommendations for Future Research

The Assessment Template has been used for two semesters, and there seems to be a willingness to use this device to collect data. Currently the template allows faculty to self-select an initial benchmark; future research might look at acceptable benchmarks for success in similar courses at other institutions. It would save faculty from recreating the wheel while giving them a basis for comparison.

Usability issues need to be addressed. In the Assessment Template's initial debut, the online user interface was unwieldy. The text boxes did not expand, and the data was not retrievable. These two difficulties caused many headaches among the faculty. Future researchers may wish to have more in-depth beta testing.

The Feedback Rubric has not yet been used for enough time to offer recommendations for future works. However, initial work with the Feedback Rubric shows that some parts are less useful than other. Those parts that are simply a check box rather than comments could be expanded. The Feedback Rubric is limited by not offering more opportunities for qualified discussion and in depth analysis of the data. In its current iteration the Feedback Rubric is simply confirmation of compliance rather than a tool used to create the recursive process of assessment.

While the use of the Assessment Template and Feedback Rubric seems to indicate an improvement in faculty attitudes toward assessment, the results of the initial survey are inconclusive. Pre-existing faculty attitudes may have shifted the survey results or simply a flawed instrument could have caused the same shift. There may be other factors not considered that influence faculty attitudes. In order to get more conclusive results, future studies should broaden the scope of colleges using a template to include those who have been using a template for a number of assessment cycles. Research could also look at the faculty attitudes on assessment at institutions where no template yet exists.

Summary

Community colleges are increasingly faced with attempting to prove student learning through outcomes assessment. This pressure to assess outcomes serves a dual purpose of accountability and improvement. This project proved faculty with a template to collect and report institutional learning outcomes assessment with the intent of creating more uniform data and positively influence faculty attitudes toward assessment.

While the survey did not conclusively prove that a template does improve faculty attitudes toward assessment, it did show promising results about faculty attitudes that indicated further research is warranted. Qualitative results indicated faculty are more apt to rate assessment efforts positively when provided with a template for data collection and reporting. By connecting the student level outcomes with the institutional learning outcomes, the college can provide accountability to stakeholders as well as provide data-driven curricular changes toward continued student learning. Continuing with the use of the template over time would provide the college with more information and uniform data to continue with the recursive process of student learning.

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APPENDIX
A: ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment Tool

KVCC Mission Statement

We are committed to enriching the lives of our students and communities through quality educational programs and services. To accomplish these ends, we will:

Support student goal achievement through access to learning experiences and assessment.

Support a balance between a comprehensive curricular base and innovations in education, personal development and technology by strategically utilizing resources.

Provide curriculum and supportive services relevant to the needs of individuals, enterprise and government.

Maintain a learning environment built upon the inclusivity of ideas of all cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

Support economic vitality and stability through development of a skilled local workforce.

Integrate the components of campus based instruction, M-TEC and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum to support student and community needs.

Department: Date Revised:

Course:

Department Mission Statement:

Institutional Learning Outcomes by Course

Select no more than two of the Institutional Learning Outcomes that are part of the syllabus for each course.

- Effective written and oral communication
- Ability to think critically and to solve problems
- Ability to work in groups
- Information, numeric and technology literacy
- A highly developed sense of ethics
- Respect for diversity
- A global perspective
- Strong personal management skills

Identify the student course objectives listed on the master syllabus that support each institutional learning outcome selected above.

Select the measurement tools used in the course to assess this learning objective.

- Analytical synthesis
- Capstone project
- Case study
- Class presentation
- Collaborative learning activity
- Creative/artistic production/performance
- Departmental exam
- Embedded question(s)
- Laboratory exercise
- Pre/post test
- Portfolio
- Research paper
- Self-directed learning activity
- Simulation
- Writing sample
- Other written work. Please describe:

Other activity. Please describe:

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment Tool

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Support economic vitality and stability through development of a skilled local workforce.

Integrate the components of campus based instruction, M-TEC and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum to support student and community needs.

Effectiveness Issue: Your Question

Describe what your department seeks to measure.

Describe the changes implemented from the previous assessment cycle

Benchmark: Your Measure of Success

Describe what students will be able to do or achieve.

Describe the threshold for success in terms of lowest acceptable score. List the percentage of students your department would like to have met that threshold.

For example, 60% of students will achieve a score of 70% or higher on a departmental exam. This is simply a place to start. You may find next assessment cycle that your benchmark may need to be shifted.

Outline of Action Plan: How You Did It

Who did you assess?

- All sections
- Piloted sections (please complete) ___ of sections out of ___ sections offered.

When?

Expectation: Assessment is to take place every semester in which the course is offered.

- Once per semester.
- Once per year.
- Ongoing

How? Complete the Blinn College Chart.

You may complete only those portions which pertain to your class.

Evaluation of Findings: Was the benchmark met?

- Yes
- No

If no, please describe the corrective action plan.

Describe variables found in the data. Did you notice any trends between the sections?

If so, please describe

Did you notice any changes between semesters?

If so, please describe.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment Tool

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Provide curriculum and supportive services relevant to the needs of individuals, enterprise and government.

Maintain a learning environment built upon the inclusivity of ideas of all cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

Support economic vitality and stability through development of a skilled local workforce.

Integrate the components of campus based instruction, M-TEC and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum to support student and community needs.

Detail the formal departmental feedback techniques for the results.
Expectation: All full-time and part-time faculty will receive feedback

- Department meeting (Full and part-time faculty)
- Department memo (Full and part-time faculty)
- Moodle upload
- Other, please describe

Action Plan for Improvement to Suggest Evidence of Informed Changes

Describe any changes you will make in the curriculum, teaching and/or learning strategies.

List the action dates and follow-up required

The next report will be provided in:

- Six (6) months
- One (1) semester
- One (1) year in the Fall Winter Summer
- one (1) assessment cycle which is _____

Distribution of Findings

Submit this completed report to your academic dean.

Date Submitted:

Please list all names of those who were responsible for the data collected:

APPENDIX
B: FEEDBACK RUBRIC

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Department Assessment Feedback Tool

Department:

Date Assessed:

Institutional Learning Objectives by Course

List no more than two of the institutional learning objectives that are part of the syllabus for each course.

- Two institutional learning outcomes were listed for each course.
- One of the institutional learning outcomes were listed but not clearly linked to a course.
- None of the institutional learning outcomes were listed.

List the course learning objectives that support each institutional learning objective.

- All course learning objectives were clearly listed for each course.
- Some of the course learning objectives were listed but not clearly linked to a course.
- None of the none objectives were listed.

Select the activities/assessments conducted in the course to meet this learning objective.

- The activities/assessment selected seem reasonable given the nature of the course.
- The activities/assessment selected seem weak given the nature of the course.
- The activities/assessment selected seem unreasonable given the nature of the course.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Effectiveness Issue - The Question

Describe what your department seeks to measure.

- Desired results for the course were clearly written.
- Desired results for the course were unclear.
- Desired results were omitted.

Describe the changes implemented from the previous year.

- Not applicable. This is the first year of assessing institutional learning objectives.
- Changes implemented from previous year were clearly written.
- Changes implemented from previous years were unclear.
- Changes implemented were omitted.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Department Assessment Feedback Tool

Benchmark - Your Measure of Success

Describe what students will be able to do or achieve.

- Desired results for the students were clearly written.
- Desired results for the students were unclear.
- Desired results were omitted.

Describe the threshold for success in terms of lowest acceptable score. What level of accuracy is required by the student?

- Threshold within acceptable limits.
- Threshold marginal.
- Threshold too low/not set.

List the percentage of students your department would like to have met that threshold. What is the minimum benchmark you would like to see met?

- Percent of students expected to meet or exceed threshold acceptable.
- Percent of students expected to meet or exceed threshold too high.
- Percent of students expected to meet or exceed threshold too low.
- Not identified.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Outline of Action Plan - How it was Done

List tools that can be used to measure the inquiry and benchmark.

- Tools listed seem appropriate for subject matter.
- Tools listed seem marginal for subject matter.
- Tools listed not appropriate for subject matter.

List the total number of sections assessed.

Total number listed: _____

Total number missing: _____

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Department Assessment Feedback Tool

Research Data and Blinn Organizer

Who was assessed?

- Groups assessed clearly listed.
- Groups assessed not clear.

What were the results for each Institutional Learning Objective?

- Results clearly written.
- Results unclear.
- Results missing/incomplete.

What does each of the numbers represent?

- Interpretation clear and complete.
- Interpretation unclear and incomplete.
- Interpretation missing.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Evaluation of Findings

Was the benchmark met? By How Many?

- Benchmark met. _____
- Benchmark not met. _____
- Benchmark not identified. _____

Describe variables found in the data

- Trends (or lack of trends) noted and clearly stated.
- Trends noted but unclear.
- No trends listed.
- Not applicable. First year of assessment.

How do these results compare with previous semesters?

- Results noted and discussed in detail.
- Results discussed but lack detail.
- No results discussed.

Formal feedback techniques.

- Shared with all stakeholders.
- Shared with most stakeholders.
- Shared with some stakeholders.
- Not shared with stakeholders.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Department Assessment Feedback Tool

Action Plan for Improvement and Follow-up Schedule

Describe any proposed changes in the curriculum, teaching and/or learning strategies.

- Changes not needed.
- Changes described in detail.
- Changes described but lack enough detail.
- No changes described.

List the action dates and follow-up required.

- Dates and follow ups listed.
- Dates and follow ups not listed.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Distribution of Findings

To whom were the findings distributed, when, and by what means?

- Results distributed to all stakeholders.
- Results need to be more widely distributed.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

APPENDIX
C: BLINN ORGANIZER

Kalamazoo Valley Community College
General Education Outcomes Assessment

Course: _____ Instructor: _____
 Section: _____ Semester: _____ Year: _____

Outcome: *Effective written and oral communication*

Organize and articulate thoughts and concepts in written and oral form to address a particular topic and audience. Revise a well-developed final product in standard American English utilizing external sources and proper citations.

Strategies/Course Requirements

Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
Number Students Assessed	Number Students Successful	Pre/Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentat. Score	Other Test Score	Class Particip. Score	Other Measure Score

Outcome: *Ability to think critically and to solve problems*

Recognize, define, analyze, evaluate, and interpret information to solve problems, draw logical conclusions, and develop alternative solutions or strategies.

Strategies/Course Requirements

	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students Successful	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentation Score	Other Test Score	Class Particip. Score	Other Measure Score

Outcomes		Methods of Measurement												
		Number Students Assessed	Number Students Successful	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentation Score	Other Test Score	Class Participation Score	Other Measure Score			
Outcome: Ability to work in groups Demonstrate interpersonal skills and effectively collaborate with other people to achieve a common purpose. Strategies/Course Requirements														
Outcome: Information, numeric, and technology literacy Access, evaluate, and analyze various sources of information from text, data, charts, and graphs. Perform numeric computations, and analyze and interpret the results. Effectively utilize technology in completion of tasks. Strategies/Course Requirements														

Adapted from Blinn College - 3/16/2007

Outcome: A highly developed sense of ethics

	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students Successful	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignm. Score	Classroom Creativat. Score	Other Test Score	Class Particip. Score	Other Measure Score
Recognize the role ethical judgment plays in respect to society, community, and professional and personal interactions.										
Strategies/Course Requirements										

Outcome: *Respect for diversity*

	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students Successful	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentat. Score	Other Test Score	Class Participa. Score	Other Measure Score
Appreciate the rich and varied cultural backgrounds of fellow students and the global community. Understand the role that culture and environment play in individual behavior and the necessity of respecting individual differences.										
Strategies/Course Requirements										

Outcome: A global perspective

	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement								
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students Successful	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignm. Score	Classroom Presentat. Score	Other Test Score	Class Particip. Score	Other Measure Score	
Understand global interdependence and the impact of historical, geophysical, political, economic, and socio-cultural forces on nations and people.											
Strategies/Course Requirements											

Outcome: Strong personal management skills

	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students Successful	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignm. Score	Classroom Presentat. Score	Other Test Score	Class Particip. Score	Other Measure Score
Utilize resources and budget time effectively to meet deadlines and achieve goals.										
Strategies/(Course Requirements										

APPENDIX
D: FACULTY SURVEY

1. What is your position within the college?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Full time faculty 	72.6%	45
Part time faculty 	27.4%	17
answered question		62
skipped question		0

2. In what area of the college do you serve?

	Response Percent	Response Count
General education 	70.5%	43
Occupational 	29.5%	18
answered question		61
skipped question		1

3. Have you used the new general education assessment template to report progress on KVCC's general education outcomes?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	41.9%	26
No 	54.8%	34
I don't know click here to see the template http://home.kvcc.edu/formsonline/FacultyForms/outcomes.php 	3.2%	2
answered question		62
skipped question		0

4. Did having a template give you a clearer picture of options available to you for assessment purposes?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		60.8%	31
No		39.2%	20
	If no, please explain.		18
	answered question		51
	skipped question		11

5. Did the template provide enough options in reporting outcome progression?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		75.0%	36
No		25.0%	12
	If not, please explain.		12
	answered question		48
	skipped question		14

6. Did you submit general education assessment data in any semester prior to the release of the assessment template?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		50.9%	27
No		32.1%	17
If No, why not?		5.7%	3
i. New to the position		9.4%	5
ii. Not required to do so previously		22.6%	12
iii. Not included in the data collection process		11.3%	6
	Other – please explain		8
answered question			53
skipped question			9

7. Rate the ease of reporting you experienced with using the previous methods PRIOR to the assessment template.

	Difficult	Average	Easy	Rating Average	Rating Count		
	28.9% (13)	11.1% (5)	37.8% (17)	8.9% (4)	13.3% (6)	2.67	45
answered question						45	
skipped question						17	

8. Rate the ease of reporting assessment data USING the template.

	Difficult		Average		Easy	Rating Average	Rating Count
	2.5% (1)	15.0% (6)	57.5% (23)	17.5% (7)	7.5% (3)	3.13	40
	answered question						40
	skipped question						22

9. What impact has the template had on your willingness to reporting data?

	I am less likely to report	No change	I am more likely to report	Rating Average	Rating Count		
	6.7% (3)	4.4% (2)	55.6% (25)	11.1% (5)	22.2% (10)	3.38	45
	answered question					45	
	skipped question					17	

10. Is there anything you'd like to share about assessment template?

	Response Count	
	17	
	answered question	17
	skipped question	45

11. Is there anything you'd like to share about the assessment process?

	Response Count
	19
answered question	19
skipped question	43

APPENDIX
G: IRB APPROVAL

To: Dr. Janet Alm and Deborah Coates
From: Dr. Stephanie Thomson, IRB Chair
Re: IRB Application #140307 (Title: *Using a template to influence institutional learning outcomes assessment participation*)
Date: April 9, 2014

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, "*Using a template to influence institutional learning outcomes assessment participation*" (#140307) and determined that it is *Exempt-category 1C* from full committee review. This approval has an expiration date of three years from the date of this letter. As such, you may collect data according to the procedures outlined in your application until April 9, 2017. It is your obligation to inform the IRB of any changes in your research protocol that would substantially alter the methods and procedures reviewed and approved by the IRB in this application. Your protocol has been assigned a project number (#140307) which you should refer to in future correspondence involving this same research procedure.

We also wish to inform researchers that the IRB requires follow-up reports for all research protocols as mandated by Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 (45 CFR 46) for using human subjects in research. We will send a one-year reminder to complete the final report or note the continuation of this project. The final-report form is available on the [IRB homepage](#). Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines and best wishes for a successful research endeavor. Please let us know if the IRB can be of any future assistance.

Regards,

Ferris State University Institutional Review Board
Office of Academic Research, Academic Affairs