Reimaging Faculty Engagement with Assessment: An Emergent Framework

Erika R. Hackman
Parkland College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Natasha Jankowski, Ph.D.
National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
Student Outcomes and the Faculty Role

- Achieving student success and completion goals “requires colleges to fully examine and assess outcomes” – Walter Bumphus, AACC
- Hutchings (2010): “the real promise of assessment depends on significantly growing and deepening faculty involvement” (p. 6)
- National survey data finds faculty engagement widely lacking
Defining Assessment

“a special kind of program evaluation, whose purpose was to gather evidence to improve curricula and pedagogy” (Ewell, 2002, p. 9)
What do we know?

- Varied purpose and value of outcomes assessment in higher education
- Assessment as scholarship
- Community college faculty engagement
  - Faculty leadership crucial
  - CC faculty overlooked
Faculty engagement in assessment

- Build into work
- Faculty development
- Create space for conversation
- Reframe as scholarship
- Integrate into graduate programs
- Involve students
Faculty Perceptions of LOA

How do faculty leaders perceive and experience the learning outcomes assessment process in a community college setting?

• How do faculty leaders describe the purpose and value of learning outcomes assessment?
• How do faculty leaders connect assessment and the scholarship of teaching and learning?
Let’s hear from the faculty

- Ten faculty at two large, Midwestern community colleges (RRCC, MCC)
- “Information rich” cases (Patton, 2002): Focus on *faculty leaders* who are substantially engaged in assessment work
- Interviews; protocol developed from Hutchings (2010) recommendations for faculty engagement in assessment
Faculty Leaders’ Perceptions

Faculty Support – “holding our hand throughout the process” (Sean, RRCC)

Embedded Work – the “heart of what we do” (Paul, RRCC)

Communication – “it’s on everybody’s radar” (John, RRCC)

Student-centered – “get to know where the students are” (Joan, RRCC)

Learning-focused – focus on outcomes of learning (Liam, MCC)
Purpose and Value of Assessment

• Provide evidence of learning
  – “is it working?” (Joan, RRCC)

• Use data to inform change
  – “feedback loop”
  – Studying student learning in different lab settings (Liam, MCC)

• Faculty ownership is key
  – Process respects faculty academic freedom; empowers faculty as leaders (Frank, RRCC)
Connecting Assessment and Scholarship

• “It’s what we do, but we don’t call it that”
  – “Instructors, who actually do assessment... their voices are not heard” (John, RRCC)

• Faculty need support and training to study student learning
  – “a lot of education training courses for their faculty” (Frank, RRCC)

• Adjuncts experience substantial challenges in studying student learning
  – “I didn’t have any part in making it up as an adjunct” (Rhonda, MCC)
Engaging Community College Faculty in LOA

Faculty Support
Embedded Work
Consistent Communication
Student Centered
Learning Focused
How does this relate to what you see in your work or the in the field of assessment?
Since 2008, NILOA’s mission has been to discover and disseminate effective uses of assessment data to strengthen undergraduate education and support institutions in their assessment efforts.

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Welcome to NILOA

Our December newsletter featuring NILOA updates, news, and upcoming conferences and programs is now available.

In the News | Archive

Educating Minds Online
Fri, Jan 02, 2015 - 08:00 am
James M. Lang in the Chronicle of Higher Education

James Lang writes about his interview with Michelle Miller, Co-Director of Northern Arizona University's first-year learning program, and her new book, Minds Online: Teaching Effectively With Technology. The various ways that technology can help in pedagogy and learning to increase student motivation and engagement, as well as issues with online programs, are discussed.

Room to Experiment
Tue, Dec 30, 2014 - 08:00 am
Carl Straumsheim in Inside Higher Ed

Ball State University has developed two new high-tech classrooms centered on the concept of active learning. By incorporating both technology and changes in pedagogy to enable more in-class collaboration and discussion, as opposed to a lecture-style approach, student engagement is on the rise.

How Big Money Can, and Can't, Shake Up Teaching
Mon, Dec 29, 2014 - 08:00 am
Dan Barret in the Chronicle of Higher Education

Dan Barrett highlights efforts by Harvard University and the University of Michigan, which have devoted $40 and $25 million, respectively, to faculty members to experiment with and improve learning. However, while money sends an effective message on the importance of learning, it is not enough if the motivation, time, and infrastructure for innovation are missing.
First, A Little Context: Provost Survey 2013

- Provosts at regionally accredited, undergraduate degree-granting institutions (n=1,202)
- Findings in report “Knowing What Students Know and Can Do”

http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/knowingwhatstudentsknowandcando.html
Uses of assessment results - 2009 vs. 2013
When asked about needs to advance assessment work provosts said...

- More faculty engaged in assessment!!!
- More faculty using assessment results!!!
- More professional development!!!

Yet what was not mentioned....?
Engaging Faculty (Cain and Hutchings, 2015)

- Locate assessment in the commitments that faculty hold
- Respect faculty curricular authority and ownership
- Cultivate the faculty voice
- Facilitate both formal development opportunities and informal spaces for faculty to engage with, learn about, and enact assessment
Cont.

• Create mechanisms to share internal best practices and success stories
• Provide the structural support to encourage faculty to take assessment seriously
• Build on disciplinary expertise and perspectives
• Allow for flexibility within a shared framework
• Embed assessment in the work faculty are already doing
Questions? Comments?