



ASSESSMENT IN ACTION

Volume 1: Issue 2

October 2006



THOUGHT THERE WAS NO SUCH THING AS A **FREE LUNCH**~

WRONG

SCHEDULE A PROGRAM ASSESSMENT MINI-WORKSHOP TODAY AND **FREE LUNCH FOR THE DEPARTMENT.**

FIND A DATE/TIME TO GATHER YOUR DEPARTMENT, CONTACT THE ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR, RECEIVE GUIDANCE HELPING YOUR DEPARTMENT THROUGH THE BEGINNING OR THE COMPLETION OF YOUR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN.

SCHEDULE TODAY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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GENERAL EDUCATION

Q. What exactly is "General Education" and why is it considered a special category for assessment?

A. "Gen Ed" assessment is the "can of worms" that every institution must eventually deal with, the one that strikes fear into the hearts of those poor souls who have been given the assignment of developing a "Gen Ed" assessment plan.

The first problem is defining "Gen Ed" because it can mean different things to different departments and programs. Basically, it is the set of

knowledge, skills, and values that all students can reasonably be expected to attain by virtue of their successful completion of a course of study: communications skills; math computation skills; human behavior; a cultural

environment requirement, etc. "Gen Ed" is based on its own philosophy, mission statement, and any other public statements made concerning general education [See pages 23 and 24 of the *CC Catalog* for relevant passages.]

The General Education Assessment Committee has divided into subcommittees to address outcomes for each AREA of general

education. Once the criteria have been identified, accrediting agencies have asked that there be multiple measures at multiple points in the student's career, such as at initial enrollment, after the first year, at graduation, and perhaps at several points beyond graduation. Some of the criteria may be relatively easy to assess, but others may be much more difficult to measure. Thank you to Subcommittee chairs:

JARED BOWDEN (MATH COMPUTATION)

GWEN REMINGTON (COMMUNICATION)

JERRY NELSON (HUMAN BEHAVIOR)

EVERT BROWN (REASONING AND INQUIRY IN SCIENCE)

JENNIFER COWELL (CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT)

All assessment involves decisions about who to assess, when to assess, how to assess, and what to do with the results, but "Gen Ed" assessment adds some interesting twists to each of these.

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

NEW TO THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE! WELCOME ABOARD!

DOUGLAS GARLAND, JARED BOWDEN, & BECKY DVORAK

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE AGENDAS AND MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE ASSESSMENT WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.CASPERCOLLEGE.EDU/FACULTY_STAFF/ASSESSMENT/AGENDAS_MINUTES.HTML](http://www.caspercollege.edu/faculty_staff/assessment/agendas_minutes.html)

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO ATTEND MEETINGS

T, November 7, 3pm

T, December 5, 3pm

All meetings in CE 207

DID YOU KNOW?

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) provides a much-needed tool for assessing quality in community college education. CCSSE results help colleges focus on good educational practice — defined as practice that promotes high levels of student learning and retention — and identify areas in which community colleges can improve their programs and services for students. All their work is grounded in research about what works in strengthening student learning and persistence.

The survey asks questions about institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and retention. Results are public, and they are presented for the full CCSSE population, various subgroups

within the full population (for Casper College this means other Wyoming community colleges), and individual colleges. Results include national benchmarks and institutional benchmark scores for five key areas of engagement.

The Wyoming Community College Commission supports CCSSE and has agreed to fund it all community college campuses across the state. Beginning in November you will receive more information regarding how CCSSE will be administered and how the results will be used to improve institutional practices. For more information on CCSSE visit their website at:

<http://www.ccsse.org>

- 50% of the undergraduate students in public colleges and universities in the U.S. are now enrolled in community colleges.
- 34% of survey respondents have children living at home, 57% work more than 20 hours a week. Most are financially independent of their parents, and 45% of surveyed students report that lack of finances would be a likely or very likely cause for them to drop out of college.

Q. For the assessment of a multi-section course, my department has chosen a pre-test/post-test strategy, but I'd be interested in knowing how other disciplines are approaching this.

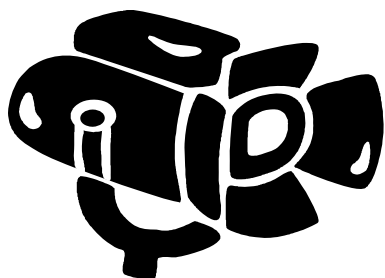
A. Indeed, the pre-test/post-test strategy is a popular and completely appropriate method for many disciplines, but some interesting and creative variations are being pursued. For example, in Anthropology the students could each write a response to two essay questions in class,

one early in the quarter and one near the end. Those responses could be assessed to determine how well the analytical concepts and vocabulary of anthropology have been integrated into the students' thinking. Philosophy could do something similar with entrance/exit essays related to a general concept in philosophy. Other disciplines are looking for direct student input to help shape courses. For example, Math students could be given a survey near the end of the quarter to help answer the question, "Does the

current Math course meet the needs of the students who enroll in it?" In Physical Therapy Assistant Program, students could be asked to rate and rank the topics presented to determine which ones should be retained or have more or less time devoted to them.

The combined data for all students could be analyzed statistically to determine what, if any, modifications should be made to the course.

September Assessment Spotlight



This month's spotlight goes to Brandi Atnip, Scott Johnson and the **Biology Department**. The Biology Department is reviewing outcomes that are measurable and tied to the program mission. They

have established a date in November to review assessment practices and continue to improve their current plan.

Thank you Biology!

ONE-MINUTE PAPER

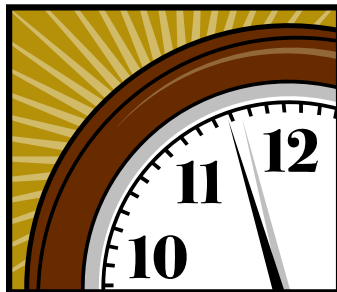
The "One Minute Paper" is exactly what the title says—a one minute paper, which can be administered at the end of any class meeting or at the conclusion of an important presentation or key concept. Student are asked to take one minute to write a *non-graded response* key questions, which may include:

What was the most important information presented in today's class session?

What concept was most difficult for you to understand?

What could I do as a teacher to present the material more effectively?

This assessment activity provides immediate feedback to the course instructor regarding



student understanding of key concepts. The instructor obtains direct, succinct information from each student, and upon an aggregate review, knows how well a concept has been assimilated by the class. The aggregate information obtained in the "One Minute Paper" may be used as evidence regarding students' abilities to meet articulated learning outcomes, a part of any quality assessment plan. In addition, the "One Minute

Paper" furnishes feedback on what the students have not understood, so that the teacher can revisit or clarify material as needed. The "One Minute Paper" — put it to the test in your courses!!!

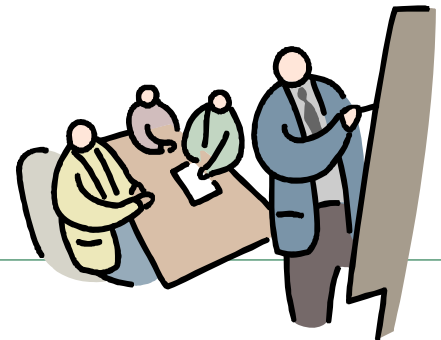
Upcoming

Assessment Conferences

October 30/31 Indianapolis, IN —2006 Assessment Institute

November 12/13/14 Washington , DC— CAS National Symposium on Standards, Self-Assessment, and Student Learning Outcomes

February 7/8/9/, Lisle, Illinois—HLC Assessment Workshop



ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

EMBEDDED ASSESSMENT—A MEANS OF GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING THAT IS BUILT INTO A NATURAL PART OF THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS. OFTEN USED FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES IN CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE EVALUATED TO ASSIGN STUDENTS A GRADE. CAN ASSESS INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE OR AGGREGATE THE INFORMATION

TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE COURSE OR PROGRAM; CAN BE FORMATIVE OR SUMMATIVE, QUANTITATIVE OR QUALITATIVE.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT—USE OF CRITERIA (RUBRIC) OR AN INSTRUMENT DEVELOPED BY AND INDIVID-

UAL OR ORGANIZATION EXTERNAL TO THE ONE BEING ASSESSED. USUALLY SUMMATIVE, QUANTITATIVE, AND OFTEN HIGH-STAKES. EXAMPLE: ACT EXAMS.

"ASSESSMENT" FROM THE LATIN ROOT *ASSIDERE*, WHICH MEANS TO SIT BESIDE.

RUBRIC



The dictionary defines a rubric as "an authoritative rule or direction." Based on a concept called Primary Trait Analysis, a rubric is a document that an instructor creates for a specific assignment. It gives students very explicit instructions and includes grading criteria for five levels of performance, corresponding to A to F.

A rubric can help reduce the subjectivity in grading essays. For example, instructors could create the following rubric to address the problem of "off-topic" responses: A "C" essay may have some correct facts, but it doesn't directly address the question asked. A "B" essay addresses the question asked and provides adequate factual support. An "A" essay completely addresses the question with a full range of factual material

drawn from lectures, text, and films.

Research on rubrics shows:

Grading is less time-consuming because instructors can attach the grading criteria right to the exam and circle criteria that have not been met. There are far fewer disputes about grades. When there is a challenge, instructors can point out exactly what expectation has not been met, and the student seems to accept the grade much more readily.