Northeastern University

ASSESSMENT METHODS

To gather evidence of student learning, it is recommended that a variety of assessment methods (direct, indirect, qualitative, quantitative) should be used to provide adequate feedback to the program to identify strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum (Maki, 2004).

In general, there are two types of assessment: direct and indirect.

Direct assessments require students to produce work so that reviewers (faculty members, industry professionals) can assess how well students are meeting expectations.

Indirect assessments provide vested audiences (i.e., students, employers, faculty, co-op coordinators) with an opportunity to reflect on the work that students are producing and thus inform the reviewers with their opinion and perception of the students' learning experience (Palomba & Banta, 1999). Although indirect methods are helpful when interpreting the findings of direct assessments, they are not as useful in identifying specific knowledge and skill strengths and deficiencies.

While departments and programs often collect their own data, it is important to recognize that the institution collects evidence indirectly related to student learning. Taking advantage of institution collected data allows for a streamlined process that therefore does not duplicate efforts of individuals – including over burdening participants.

Examples of Direct Assessments
- Student work (artifacts) that are embedded in the course (i.e., assignments, exams, projects, research papers, final papers, oral presentations/exams, recital, play, performance)
- Pre- and post-tests of skills and knowledge
- Comprehensive exams (for the degree)
- Standardized tests developed within the program
- National standardized exams (i.e., GRE subject exams, National Major Field Achievement Tests, ETS field tests, Collegiate Learning Assessment, Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency, iSkills)
- Certification, licensure exams
- Senior thesis or major project
- Portfolio evaluation
- Poster presentation
- Case studies
- Reflective journals
- Capstone projects
- Internal/external juried review of performances and exhibitions
- Experiential Learning evaluation
- External examiners/peer review
- Evaluations with rubrics

Examples of Indirect Assessments
- Departmental survey
- Exit interview
- Survey of current students
- Survey of faculty members
- Survey of co-op coordinators
- Alumni survey
- Employer survey
- Focus group
- Job placement statistics
- Percentage of students who participate in Co-op, Internships, Service Learning, etc.

Examples of Institutional Data
- Co-op data (i.e., student assessments, employer assessments, reflections, statistics)
- Alumni survey
- Graduation and/or retention rates
- Institutional data (i.e., Fact Book, IPEDS, etc.)
- Survey of Recent Graduates
- Survey of Graduating Seniors

SOURCES:
Maki, P. (2004). *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution.*
Palomba, C. A., & Banta, T. W. (1999). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education.*
http://assessment.tamu.edu/resources/methods.html