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Using Assessment Results at California State University, Monterey Bay

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Learning outcomes are only as good as the conversations they generate

Using assessment results is one of the three pillars of [CSUMB's holistic alignment strategy](#) for improving student learning. Read about [CSUMB's Assessment Philosophy & Practice](#).

Framework for using assessment results to improve student learning

Guiding principles

1. No harm to faculty or staff during the assessment process. As the Latin root *assidere* suggests, we believe assessment is a process that is done with and not to our faculty and students. Using assessment effectively means we work alongside programs to support student success by improving student learning.
2. Responses are evidence-based.
3. Responses are implemented at course, program, and/or institutional levels.
4. Responses enhance student learning.
5. Responses reach all students, ensuring equitable access to improving student learning.

Process

1. Identify assessments that suggest opportunities to improve student learning.
2. Generate ideas for improving student achievement in the following categories (ideally with student input):
   a. Student information (support structures, readiness, life experiences, etc.)
   b. Outcomes (clarity, fit, alignment with vision and mission, etc.)
   c. Curriculum (content, understanding, skills, etc.)
   d. Pedagogy (facilitating learning, culturally responsive teaching, etc.)
   e. Assessment (measuring achievement of outcomes, rubric development, etc.)
   f. External alignment (interdisciplinary, career, workforce fit, authentic assignments, etc.)
3. Develop a strategic plan (prioritize interventions)
4. Implement interventions
5. Assess the response

Using assessment results (hypothetical example)

1. Identify assessments that indicate opportunities to improve student learning.

- **Data source:** Upper division courses that meet MLO 3

- **Time frame:** Summer 2017 ULO 1 assessment of written communication, information literacy, and critical thinking
- **Courses from which student work was assessed:** BIO 400, BIO 403, BIO, 445, and BIO 498
- **Assessment instrument:** ILO1 Written Communication Integrated Rubric
- **Assessment results**

	Issue/problem definition	Support	Synthesis	Position	Audience & context	Conclusions & outcomes	Academic integrity	Grammar & mechanics
% above proficiency	61	51	49	39	57	35	49	40
% below proficiency	39	49	51	**61**	43	**65**	51	**60**

- **Interpretation of results:** The 2017 assessment of written communication suggests opportunities for improving student achievement of written communication outcomes in all areas, but in particular for position, conclusions and outcomes, and grammar and mechanics.

2. Generate ideas for improving student achievement in the following categories (ideally with student input):

Category	Response 1	Response 2	Response 3	Response 4
Student information	Work with the Cooperative Learning Center (CLC)	Develop on-line, self-study materials	Assess prior knowledge	Implement peer, near-peer, or faculty mentoring
Outcomes	Revise MLO to emphasize written communication	Add course-level written communication outcomes to more courses	Get student feedback on program-level written communication outcomes	Communicate outcomes to students
Curriculum	Change course prerequisites	Add a new course	Align content in sequences courses	Improve alignment with GE courses
Pedagogy	Implement Reading Apprenticeship	Provide formative feedback	Facilitate active learning	Implement peer teaching observations and feedback

Assessment	Conduct student focus groups	Align rubrics used in different courses	Create a signature assignment used across multiple sections and/or courses	Use the institutional written communication rubric to improve the program-level rubric
External alignment	Solicit input from employers	Create authentic assignments	Survey alumni	Survey current students engaged in internships

3. Develop a strategic plan

Identify possible response(s), then meet with program faculty and staff to decide priority and fine-tune response(s)

To address students scoring below proficient on conclusion and outcomes, the following interventions were prioritized:

- **Priority One - Student Information:** Work with Cooperative Learning Center writing tutors on addressing conclusions and outcomes in writing assignments
- **Priority Two - Student Information:** Create an online writing resource for students on addressing conclusions and outcomes in writing assignments
- **Priority Three - Pedagogy:** Provide professional development to faculty on facilitating classroom learning activities designed to help students address conclusions and outcome in department-specific writing assignments.
- **Priority Four - Curriculum:** Review relevant GE writing assignment prompts and look for alignment opportunities.

4. Implement response(s)

Writing center director will work with learning center writing tutors to develop strategies for helping students address conclusions and outcomes in writing assignments.

5. Assess the response(s)

Keep in mind that changes are not necessarily improvements. Determine how you will assess whether the response resulted in improvement. But keep in mind that this is not a disciplinary research project, so it's unlikely you will prove beyond a reasonable doubt. That is, this is about making decisions using some -- rather than no -- data and IMproving, not proving. Identify both direct and indirect assessment opportunities.

- **Direct:** During the next program and/or institutional assessment projects, score work from students who participated in classes in which one of the responses was implemented.
- **Indirect:** Survey students about their understanding of what constitutes conclusions and outcomes in writing assignments, what support they have received, and their own proficiency. Survey faculty members who teach in relevant GE and major-based courses on their ability to support student learning in this area and whether they are seeing improvements in student proficiency in conveying conclusions and outcomes in writing assignments.