Student Learning Assessment: What Middle States Expects

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Teaching Workshop
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Overview

- Middle States
- Assessment Cycle
- Characteristics of Good Assessment
Regional Accrediting Agencies
An Effective Institution

Middle States:

“An effective institution is one in which growth, development, and change are the result of a thoughtful and rational process of self-examination and planning, and one in which such a process is an inherent part of ongoing activities.”

Assessment Cycle

How can we improve?

Use of Results

Learning Outcomes

What are we trying to do?

Assessment Method

Assessment Plan

How well are we doing?

Assessment Results

Criteria for Success

Loyola College
Learning Outcomes

- What should students know?
- What should students be able to do?
- What should students value?
Program Outcomes vs. Learning Outcomes (an Example)

- The program will engage students in the study of cultural and socioeconomic factors related to small group dynamics.

- Students will be able to articulate cultural and socioeconomic differences and the significance of these differences in small group dynamics.
Levels of Learning Outcomes

“clearly articulated statements of expected student learning outcomes at all levels and for all programs that aim to foster student learning”

- MS Standard 14
  (fundamental element 1)
Assessment Cycle

- Learning Outcomes
- Assessment Method
- Assessment Plan
- Criteria for Success
- Assessment Results
- Use of Results
Characteristics of Good Assessment

- planned
- organized, systematic, & sustained
- cost-effective
- reasonably accurate & truthful
- useful
Useful

- Must “close the loop”
  - Answer the question “how can we improve student learning?”

- One size does not fit all
  - Assessment method must fit the outcome
  - Assessment method must fit the pedagogical culture of the discipline
  - Assessment method must fit the culture of the institution
Reasonably Accurate & Truthful

- “There is no perfectly accurate assessment tool or strategy . . .”
  
  - Assessing Student Learning and Effectiveness: Understanding Middle States Expectations (2005) p.4

- Multiple measures

- Include direct evidence
  - Why course grades are not direct evidence:
    - Grades tells you how well a student or class of students did on an assignment but does not tell anything about what those students did well and what they did not do well
Cost-Effective

- Focus on just a few outcomes in any one assessment period
- Build off of existing data (where possible)
- “Effective assessments are simple rather than elaborate . . .”
  - Assessing Student Learning and Effectiveness: Understanding Middle States Expectations (2005) p.4
Planned

- Linked to institutional priorities and goals
- Interrelated with each other
Organized, Systematic, & Sustained

- Interrelated with each other
- Assessing beyond the individual (course, major, student cohort)
- Ongoing process
  - Although not always focused on the same outcome
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