Adjuncts Take On Assessment

“Assessment takes time and energy; there is no getting around those facts. But the pay-off is worth the investment. Improving student learning is the fundamental goal of faculty, and one that is supported by the assessment process.”

That is the message that Caren Grandgenett, Joe Magnant and Cynthia Feagan want to send to faculty. These three adjuncts from the Entrepreneurship program have been actively assessing their foundation course in entrepreneurship since the college rebooted its assessment program.

As early adopters, there was a steep learning curve for the three adjuncts, but they relied on each other and received support from their department chair, Donna Duffey. Joe stated, “Donna has always been very supportive of our contributions and included us in curriculum issues. We have always joined in because we want to be best in class!” They also made use of opportunities like World Café to plan and discuss their assessment process and to analyze their data once the results were available.

Caren, Joe and Cynthia all teach the same course, but each has a different approach to the course materials. Finding common ground for an assessment that could be given in each of their courses required them to work together. The three are a diverse group teaching a common topic, but Cynthia said that “while our backgrounds are very different, that became a strength that allowed us all to contribute to a really quality assessment plan.” The trio found the process was also a lot of fun! “Much better than working in isolation,” noted Cynthia. Joe also commented that since their course is the gateway or foundation course to the entrepreneurial curriculum, assessing student learning was the “right choice.”

Through a series of meetings, many of which were joined in by their chair, Donna Duffey, the trio devised a pre/post-test that covered the key concepts of the course objectives. Using the data collected, the assessment allowed them to determine how well their students were able to accomplish Student Learning Outcome #6, “Read, analyze and synthesize written and visual material.” One early “aha” moment they experienced was their ability to adjust their instruction based on the pre-test results. As an additional benefit of the pre-course assessment, they were able to see where the students already possessed a certain level of proficiency prior to taking the class. This evidence was then used for discussion on course content and making decisions for future course content.

The three meet at the end of each semester to review the data collected and evaluate student performance against benchmarks they had established for the material. Reviewing the data, both in the aggregate and then by course topic, allowed for some rich dialogue on which topics the students were the most successful in and what approach could be used to improve performance in weaker areas.

All three agreed that once they got a working assessment model in place, it was much easier to design assessments for their other classes. Caren was adamant: “Do it once and the second time is easier!” Finally, the three agreed that the most satisfying part of assessment is contributing to the students’ potential success and ensuring they are getting relevant material, while also enjoying being a team.
Announcement

“Acting and Reporting on Assessment Work – Timing Is Everything”

Brown Bag Brownie Break
Thursday, April 7
Noon
GEB 264

Are you wondering what, how and when to act on or report your assessment data? This session is for you. We’ll discuss acting on your assessment results, and when and what to report.

Quote of the Month

“Too often, an assessment method is chosen without giving serious consideration as to whether or not the method is appropriate. For instance, a nationally normed standardized test might be a relatively easy way to obtain data, but if the test doesn’t assess the outcomes of the program, it isn’t going to offer much insight into whether or not specific program outcomes have been achieved.”

Dr. Susan Hatfield (2013 Regional Assessment Conference Plenary Speaker), IDEA Paper #45, The IDEA Center, “Assessing Your Program-Level Assessment Plan”

Spring 2013 Mini-Grant Recipients

Melanie Harvey, Anna Page and Kim Criner.

Jay Antle and Kim Criner
“Cross-Disciplinary Assessment Rubric for Sustainability Curriculum Courses – Retreat,” $153

Sheri Barrett
“Participation in the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education Conference,” $500

Kay King
“Participation in the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education Conference,” $500

Melanie Harvey
“Analysis of Student Learning on Final Exam in General Chemistry – 4000 Scantrons,” $450

Jennifer Menon
“My Readiness for Anatomy and Physiology Pilot – Retreat,” $422

Anna Page
“Nutrition Assessment Project – Textbook and Retreat,” $244

Jane Zaccardi
“Practical Nursing/HCPW – Retreat,” $400

3rd Annual Regional Community College Assessment Conference
Assessment Matters
Friday, April 19, 2013 | 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. | No charge for JCCC faculty and staff
Go to jccc.edu/faculty-development/outcomes-assessment - use code RCCAC to register