



JOHNSON COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Volume 7, Issue 1
September 2015

Save the Date

Assessment by Design Workshop

Friday, January 8

6th Annual Regional Community College Assessment Conference

Friday, April 22
9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Office of Outcomes Assessment

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photos by
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Spotlight on **Assessment**

Joining the Debate: Does Assessment Matter?

I have been reading with interest an ongoing debate taking place in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and on some assessment listservs to which I subscribe.

The basic question is this: after two decades of colleges doing assessment work, is there evidence that such work is efficacious? I really don't mind the question; it is a wholly appropriate question to ask ourselves. Unfortunately, the writer of the *Chronicle* article that generated all the chatter tied assessment activities specifically to accreditation requirements. He questions whether accrediting bodies should still stress assessment as one of the criteria for accreditation. Honestly, I prefer we go back to the original and most fundamental question upon which good assessment is based: "How do we know our students are learning?"

The posts and opinions I have read in response to the article suggest to me that the problems we face regarding assessment exist on several levels.

While I haven't posted my two cents' worth online, I will share my views here for your consideration.

- 1) We do not have a common language for assessment. We all define goals, outcomes and competencies in a similar fashion. However, we don't all assess these in the same way. For some schools, assessment is a nationally standardized test administered to students during senior year. For others, it is a set of embedded assessments that examine learning outcomes regularly at the course, program and institutional level. These perspectives are not necessarily compatible – they don't really play well together, or build a common understanding of the purpose of assessment.
- 2) We assume that assessment should meet the standard of experimental research design – something that can be replicated independent of instructor, school or program. In fact, assessment is far more closely aligned with Action Research, which informs local practice for the purpose of improvement in a classroom or course.
- 3) We've lost sight of the ultimate purpose of assessment – to examine student learning rather than simply to satisfy an accreditation requirement. Faculty have always assessed student performance; institutional assessment is just a more systematic and defined mechanism for doing so. Unlike course grades, assessment doesn't weigh in on attendance, or participation in class. Instead, assessment helps faculty narrow their focus to one program, course or classroom goal and understand how well students are achieving that goal.

Recently, I came across some old pictures from my childhood. They were of a camping trip that my family took to Boggy Creek campground in Florida. These pictures represent a single moment in time, capturing an unedited slice of life that offers the viewer bits of detailed information about our trip. But a snapshot can't convey the larger context, the big picture that is present beyond the frame. It can only reveal what the camera is pointed at. Assessment is much like that. It doesn't tell the big picture story of everything that happened in your classroom/course/program, but it tells an important piece of the story. And for purposes of improving student outcomes, that is enough.

<http://chronicle.com/article/Does-Assessment-Make-Colleges/232371/>

Chronicle of Higher Education, August 14, 2015, "Does Assessment Make Colleges Better? Who Knows?" by Erik Gilbert

6th Annual Regional Community College Assessment Conference

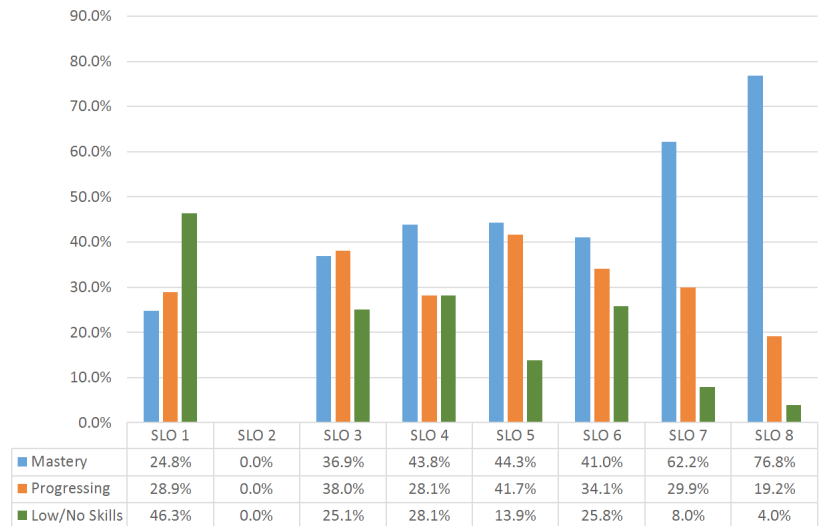
Friday, April 22, 2016 – hosted by Johnson County Community College

Keynote speaker: Dr. Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director,
Center for Postsecondary Research & NSSE Institute

General Education Assessment Update

In the 2014-15 academic year, more than 10,000 students were assessed across the general education curriculum in multiple courses and disciplines. The results of those assessments appear by Student Learning Outcomes in the following chart.

Campus-wide Student Learning Outcomes
AY 2014-15



In this first year of data submission on general education outcomes, no general education courses chose Student Learning Outcome number 2 - Collaborate respectfully with others. This anomaly may have occurred because disciplines were encouraged to choose their primary learning outcome for this first data collection. As the process matures and disciplines branch out in assessing outcomes, some disciplines may begin choosing this learning outcome as one to assess. As departments meet and discuss the 2014-15 data collection, faculty should use Xitrac to capture and report their conclusions on the data.

Data is available on each division of the college offering general education courses. Please contact the Office of Outcomes Assessment for a full copy of the dataset.

Expanding into Social Media

The office expanded its audience both internally and externally this past academic year by becoming more active on social media. Log-on and check out our bi-weekly posts on a blog hosted by JCCC and sponsored by OOA that addresses issues within the profession and provides useful information on assessment initiatives. The site includes interviews conducted in the JCCC studios with faculty members from different departments who are active in assessment efforts. The new blog presence will serve as an important assessment resource for JCCC faculty as well as for colleagues from other institutions.



In addition to the blog, the office expanded its use of Twitter as another means of apprising internal and external audiences of program offerings.

The OOA blog and Twitter feed can be viewed at: blogs.jccc.edu/outcomesassessment

Mark Your Calendars Now!



This daylong assessment workshop is geared to help faculty understand and apply the cycle of assessment and plan their assessment activities for the coming semester. Faculty participating will receive a "Certificate of Completion" for this faculty development offering. January 8, 2016 – CRN 30200.

Assessment Council Representatives for the 2015-16 Academic Year

Academic Support Division –
Mark Swails

Arts, Humanities and Social
Sciences Division – Frank Galbrecht

Business Division – Anna Page and
Sheri Barrett, co-chairs

Communications Division –
Valerie Mann

English Division – Beth Gulley

Health and Wellness Division –
Ginny Radom

Math Division – Aaron Gibbs

Science Division – Currently Unfilled

Technology Division – William Brown



Didn't get the opportunity to finalize all your assessment needs at World Café? Still have questions about assessment plans? Need to engage your faculty in assessment discussions?

Call the Office of Outcomes Assessment today to schedule time for a visit from the OOA staff to one of your department/division or one-on-one meetings.

Call ext. 7607 to schedule your time for a visit.